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56th year of publication

Despite decline, English church shows signs of new life

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Alan Doerksen

LONDON, England — Although church attendance in England has dropped alarmingly in recent years, there are encouraging signs of life in English Christianity, such as the popular Alpha program, and Premier: a completely Christian radio station.

A recent study by the National Center for Social Research predicts a gloomy future for Christian churches in England, reports Religion Today. The report says that 44 per cent of the adult population of England do not attend church, up from 31 per cent in 1983. The number of non-churchgoers is higher in the younger adult population; nearly 66 per cent of people ages 18-24 do not attend church on a regular basis. Membership in the Church of England is also down, with only 25 per cent of the population claiming Anglican affiliation, down 15 percentage points from the early 1980s.

MICHAEL HOLFORD

St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England. Membership in the Church of England has been dropping steadily.

Tacit atheism

In England, "A tacit atheism prevails," said Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey late last year, according to Zenit and *The Telegraph*. "Death is assumed to be the end of life, bleak though that thought is." He said "modern assumptions" have abandoned the Christian teaching that "death is not the end but the door through which life in all its fullness comes to us."

The Anglican leader's pessimism comes at a time when attendance at Church of England Sunday services has dropped below one million for the first time. In theory there are about 27 million Anglicans in the United Kingdom, out of a total population of 59.5 million people.

On the Roman Catholic side of the fence, the number of Catholic priests in Great Britain is expected to drop by half in the next 10 to 15 years, and nearly a third of parishes could be without priests by 2005, according to a report cited by *The Telegraph* newspaper.

The report, by the Queen's Foundation for Theological Education in Birmingham, claims that many parish priests will either retire or die in the next 10 years and there are not enough seminarians in training to take their place.

The problem for the Catholic Church is worsened by a continuing decline in church attendance. There are 4.8 million Catholics in Britain, of which 1.3 million go to Mass weekly and another 500,000 attend once a month.

The research placed the blame partly on the "narrow focus" of parishioners, who are concerned about internal matters such as mass times, car parking and parish halls and not vocations or mission.

Asked to rate the 10 most important issues facing the church, Catholics put the shortage of priests at No. 7. The first concern was the number of young people leaving the church.

A particularly gloomy future has been predicted by Peter Brierley, the leading expert on church attendance in Britain, reports Religion Today. Christian life will be all but dead in 40 years, and the decline in church attendance also will be marked by a decline in the basic beliefs of Christianity, Brierley wrote in his book *Steps to the Future* (Scripture Union) earlier this year.

Positive developments

But on the positive side, signs of revival have been evident for several years in the evangelical and charismatic churches, as well as parts of the Church of England, reports Religion Today.

A charismatic revival that began in the early 1990s has

See **ALPHA** *page 2...*

Nigerian states consider returning schools to missions

NIGERIA (Newsroom) — Nigerian teachers and Muslims are opposing a decision by some states to hand over former church schools to their original owners in the face of declining academic standards. The Nigeria Union of Teachers believes the move is a step backward that will foster religious discrimination and cost teachers jobs.

The secondary schools were taken over by Nigeria's federal military regime in 1976 in response to protests against alleged religious indoctrination, particularly in Christian institutions, which formed the majority of the country's top secondary schools. During the colonial era, Christian missionaries, including Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, and Baptists, established schools that attracted students from various faiths. Others were established by Muslims and private secular groups. The owners of the schools taken by the government were compensated financially.

Academic standards could improve

The churches and some education specialists believe the return of the schools to their original owners will help improve falling academic standards in Nigeria. Christian educators who have been campaigning for years to reacquire the schools insist that they can run them better than the government. Churches point to higher standards in new schools they have opened in comparison with the track record of the institutions taken over by the government.

Many Nigerian states, mostly in the Christian-majority south, have been yielding to demands to hand back the schools since the return of a democratically elected government in May 1999. But in the predominantly Muslim north, where states have adopted an Islamic legal code contrary to the country's secular constitution, there is strong opposition. As part of a policy of Islamization, northern states have established government Islamic schools with no provision for teaching Christianity.

Among southern states, only

See **SOUTHERN** *page 3...*

COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS. PHOTO BY MARK VOLKERS

Children enjoy an after-school game of soccer at the Christian school in Mazhame, Nigeria. The school was started with help from Christian Reformed World Missions and Worldwide Christian Schools.

News

Alpha program, radio station energize British believers

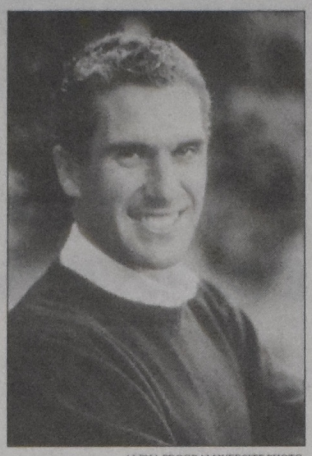
... continued from page 1

energized nominal believers. And the Alpha program, a short course in Christianity that originated in England, has transformed many non-churchgoers into true believers and spread to other parts of the world. It has become so popular that it will be presented on national television next year in England with host David Frost.

More than 7,000 Londoners join a church through the Alpha course yearly, the *Economist* reports. The 10-week "seeker-friendly" course presents the gospel in an informal setting, including midweek meetings with a meal, teachings, and discussion. During the final meeting at a weekend retreat, people are asked if they want to put their faith in Christ.

Alpha organizers estimate that 25 per cent of the one million people who have been through the course have become Christians.

Another ministry called Soul Survivor attracts thousands of young people to its annual five-day festival featuring Christian music, Bible teaching, and workshops. It recently held a citywide evangelism campaign in Manchester,



ALPHA PROGRAM WEBSITE PHOTO

Nicky Gumbel, who co-ordinates the Alpha program.

reports Religion Today.

London is the home of Premier Christian Radio, the only all-Christian radio station in England. Although it has faced some struggles and opposition, the station has continued broadcasting since 1995. Premier has won the right to remain exclusively Christian, but renewal of its license is now in jeopardy.

Two broadcasting battles

"We've been fighting two battles," David Heron, chairman of Premier, told Crosswalk.com. First was the pressure to change into a multi-faith, rather than solely Christian, radio station. "But, we've received some delightfully good news since May 16," says Heron. The government informed Premier their "exclusively Christian character will be preserved."

Heron credits the 50,000 people who prayed and petitioned the government with influencing the outcome. If forced to revamp its format to "multi-faith," Premier would have needed to carry Muslim, Buddhist and other non-Christian religious programming.

The second battle, the one for a digital broadcasting licence, goes on. Under the 1990 Broadcasting Act, religious stations in the UK are disqualified from applying for any of the new digital licences now being offered. Under British law, only the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) can transmit religious programs nationally.

Premier is in discussions with radio authorities about approving their application for a digital licence, says Heron. But it will require legislation to change the laws. While Parliament is considering a bill to overturn the ban on national religious radio stations, says Heron, it could take a couple of years.

Unequal treatment

According to Peter Kerridge, managing director of Premier, all other stations that own digital licences are entitled to an automatic renewal. "But Premier has been informed that it is not entitled to the same treatment and cannot have an automatic renewal and indeed may have to apply early for its licence," says Kerridge.

Heron explains the government's rationale: First, because Britain is "multicultural," an exclusively Christian station would not serve enough people. Second, spectrum is in short supply; and third, the bill was intended to protect the public from private owners, such as U.S. televangelists, who might make fund-raising appeals.

Kerridge observes, "We are the only Christian organization ever to be awarded a Medium Wave licence and we are the only Medium Wave radio station which broadcasts specifically Christian programs licensed in the UK. The issue is not about trying to get a licence — we already have one. The problem appears to be keeping it.... If we fail, it seems unlikely that any other Christian group will ever obtain a licence again and, if we come off the air, all the much-needed exposure that is so important to many churches and organizations will be lost forever. It is, therefore, vital that people stand with us on this issue," he says. Premier has launched a petition, which will be presented to the Government as the first stage in a major campaign to secure the station's future.

Since Premier's launch in 1995, the station has grown so that now 200,000 people, almost 20 per cent of the region's churchgoers, listen every week. In addition, thousands listen on the Internet.

Missionaries from Asia, Africa and Americas flock to Britain

LONDON (Zenit.org) — In an ironic turn of events for a country which has sent out missionaries for 200 years, hundreds of missionaries from Africa, Asia and the Americas are now flocking to Britain to convert a nation that they believe has fallen into godless secularism, *The Telegraph* reports.

About 1,500 missionaries and their full-time staff from 50 countries are believed to be operating in churches in Britain; 60 per cent are from the U.S., the newspaper said.

Role reversal

Many of the missionaries come from countries where Christianity was introduced by Britons in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The role reversal follows vast growth of the church in Africa, Asia and South America and a steady drop in churchgoing in Western Europe.

Andy Peck, assistant editor of *Christianity and Renewal* magazine, has written a guide for churches on how to make foreign missionaries feel welcome. Peck says: "The days when Britain led the world in exporting Christianity along with coal and cricket have long gone. Having led the way, we are now on the receiving end of help."

The Anglican-based Church Mission Society, which has sent missionaries abroad for the last 200 years, has now brought 20 people from India, Uganda, Chile and Sierra Leone to reinvigorate dying parishes.

Stephen Tirwomwe, from Uganda, was invited by the Mission Society in 1997 to work in a struggling Church of England parish, in Osmondthorpe, East Leeds. British missionaries opened the first church in Uganda in 1877.

Britain needs reconverting

Tirwomwe, who has come with his wife and two children on a five-year missionary visa, said: "It was so depressing when I first arrived to find churches empty, and being sold, when in Uganda there is not enough room in our churches for the people. There is a great need for revival in Britain — it has become so secular and people are so inward-looking and individualistic. The country needs reconverting."

Last October, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, declared that Britain had become an atheist society in which people looked to medicine to provide them with eternal life rather than religion. To counter that trend, missionaries like Marcos Barros have come. Barros, a pastor from Brazil, arrived in London eight years ago. He has spent three years in Edinburgh and now runs the East Lancashire Community Church in Bolton.

Result of their sacrifice

Barros says: "There is a lot of growth in Brazilian churches as a result of the work done by European missionaries, mainly from Britain. Some lost their lives in their endeavor to spread the Gospel. What is happening now in South America is a result of their sacrifice and we see ourselves as their spiritual children."

Barros, 41, who joined a Presbyterian church at age 17, works with 50 missionaries in the movement Go To The Nation. The organization sends missionaries to work alongside clergy in Methodist, Baptist, Anglican and Church of Scotland parishes. Most arrive on a one-year student visa and learn English before getting a two-year missionary visa.

Christians face attack on two fronts in Sri Lanka

PANICHANKERNY, Sri Lanka (EP) — Christians in Sri Lanka have experienced escalating persecution from both Hindu and Buddhist extremists. The island nation southeast of India is predominantly Buddhist; only eight per cent of the population claims to be Christian.

That Christian minority has been under continual fire from both extremist Hindus and Buddhists for a long time. "Christian churches — especially the smaller Protestant congregations in the countryside — have been under severe persecution and physical attack by both Hindu and Buddhist extremists for years," said Mark Albrecht, communication advisor to the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance.

Godfrey Yogarajah of the Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka reports that an attack in June against Christians by Hindus destroyed the homes of 44 families in the village of Panichankerny. Those left homeless were relocated with the help of local churches, but were attacked again on July 20. Five people were hospitalized with stab wounds. Since May, two other mob attacks have been carried out against groups of Christians and the buildings they use as churches. On June 16, a partially constructed church building in the village of Arumaugathan Kudiyiruppu was destroyed by a group of extremists.

Sri Lankan Christians also face challenges to religious activity from Buddhist leaders. Buddhist monks are lobbying the government to pass laws banning Christian conversion. They claim over 20,000 Buddhists are converting to Christianity each year and that missionaries and "proselytizers" are taking advantage of poor and disadvantaged people in rural areas.

Approximately 70 per cent of Sri Lanka's population is Buddhist, with another 12 per cent Hindu, seven per cent Muslim, and about eight per cent Christian. The Hindu population is mainly concentrated in the northern part of the country while the Christian segment is primarily in the west. The south is predominantly Buddhist. Sri Lanka has been caught since 1983 in a vicious civil war between a group of Hindu insurgents known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Buddhist government's armed forces.

News/Politics

Southern Nigerian states resist returning schools

... continued from page 1

Lagos appears to be ready to return the former private schools. Other states still are working out agreements that include protection of the rights and interests of existing students and teachers irrespective of their religious beliefs.

Despite protests from the teachers union, the Lagos state government has maintained that the decision to return the schools is irreversible. Idowu Sobowale, the state's education commissioner, has assured teachers that their jobs are secure and that the return of mission schools will help stem the moral decadence that now pervades secondary schools in the state. "We have said repeatedly that the policy is in the interest of all of us," Sobowale said. "I believe there is no issue that cannot be discussed, and teachers have absolutely nothing to lose by the implementation of the policy."

Lagos government will pay fees

Students in the affected schools in Lagos state have been assured that the government, in accordance with its free education policy, will continue to pay their fees until they graduate. Teachers will be given the option of either remaining in government employment or transferring their services to the mission schools. Nevertheless, the state branch of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has warned that its members are prepared to go on strike unless the state reverses its decision to hand over the schools.

At a recent press conference in the city of Lagos, Micheal Alogba, chairman of NUT, argued that implementation of the decision would expose teachers to job insecurity and religious discrimination. Parents and their children would be denied freedom of their choice of school, he argued, as well as unfettered access to education in a secular society. "Education would become religiously biased, elitist, and expensive, while the spirit of free universal education as entrenched in the Nigerian constitution would be negated by commercialization and victimization," Alogba said.

The teachers also contested the government's argument that the mission takeover will restore morals in schools, pointing out that parents should be blamed for indulging their children. They also faulted the government for scrapping the teaching of moral instructions in schools.

A critic of the handover, Olumide Adedayo, secretary of the Lagos-based Social Liberties Organization, believes the real issue is that the owners already have been compensated for their schools. "Why should the schools be returned to them since they have become government property?" he asked. "We should not mix religion with education." The Social Liberties Organization is a human rights group that campaigns for social justice and other human rights issues.

Alhaja Lateefat Okunnu, former president of the Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria, and former deputy governor of Lagos state, expressed concern that Muslim children in Christian schools, which form the bulk of those to be returned, might be forced to convert to Christianity.

Missionaries will improve schools

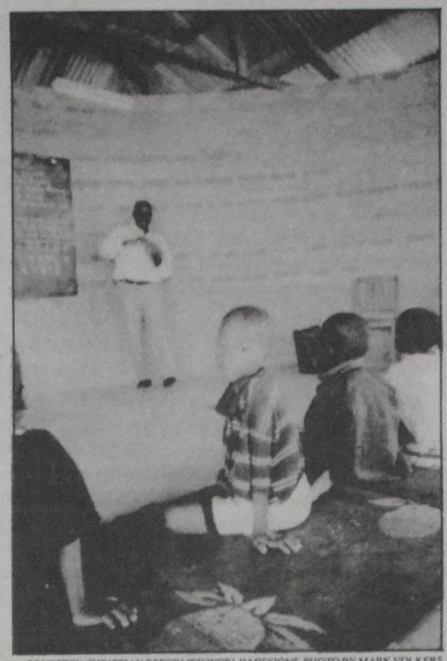
Some education specialists, however, contend that the plan will improve the schools, based on the past record of the missionaries. They noted that many African countries still allow missionaries to run schools that date back to colonial times while others are beginning to return schools that were taken over. "Those who have promised free education before have come under financial pressure," said Ademola Onifade, dean of the faculty of education of Lagos State University. "They cannot pay teachers salaries or provide adequate facilities, and have found that they need the support of the missions which are willing to fund their schools."

Onifade said the return of schools to missions will have a positive effect on Nigeria's education system and will encourage competition among owners. He believes that these schools will help secure the future of the nation by developing brilliant young people to take on strategic positions in government and the private sector, supported by quality workers. He warned, however, that owners of the schools must guard against undue emphasis on religion at the expense of education.

Quality education vital

Solomon Olaniyonu, a professor in Lagos State University's Department of Educational Management, supports mission involvement in schools but prefers that they establish new institutions instead of taking back the old ones. He believes that allowing private ownership of schools will guarantee quality education, which is required for the overall development of the continent.

Father Gabriel Osu, director of social communication for the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos, commended the Lagos state government decision, saying, "We have to go back to the days of old when the missionaries and voluntary agencies handled education. Then we were proud of our children and our schools were what they should be."



COURTESY CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS. PHOTO BY MARK VOLKERS

CRWM helped establish the very first school in the Maretu area eastern Nigeria (above).

Analyzing the stem-cell controversy

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Those with long experience in practical politics know that it often consists of making imperfect choices between difficult alternatives. This is certainly true with respect to government policies on stem cell research. Last month U.S. President George W. Bush came to a compromise decision that has pleased some and disappointed others in that country. Why the controversy?

Human stem cells were first isolated three years ago and are taken from a human embryo in the earliest stages of its development following fertilization. The number of component cells is still small, but each carries the enormous potential of making any of more than 200 types of cells found in the human body. This offers hope to people suffering from various diseases, because these stem cells could be used to replace heretofore irreplaceable tissue and thus reverse the effects of these maladies. However – and this is what makes for the controversy – extracting these cells necessarily destroys the embryo.

Potential to save lives

Many in the medical community see considerable promise in stem cell research because of its potential to save lives and greatly improve the lives of others suffering from various forms of disability. Imagine if one could regenerate spinal cord tissue and thus enable a paralyzed person to walk again. Or regenerate coronary tissue to heal a heart attack victim. The possibilities are seemingly endless and are a source of hope for many plagued by a variety of currently incurable medical conditions.

However, not everyone is enthusiastic and many are fearful of the consequences of going ahead with such research. Those in the pro-life community are especially wary because of its apparent cheapening of human life, even in its embryonic form. If human life is worthy of protection from conception to natural death, then destroying one life on the pretext of aiding another is morally wrong. Pro-lifers raise the ominous possibility of routinely producing spare human beings whose only value would be to provide organs for another, already living human being, much as auto wreckers buy old cars whose parts they use for newer models.

A self-conscious person or not?

By contrast, those favoring stem cell research point out that, because the embryo consists of only a few cells, and because there is as yet no heartbeat or brain or nervous system, one cannot speak of a self-conscious person in the full sense. They appeal to our intuitive comprehension of the vast difference between the tiny, multi-cellular human embryo and the six-to-nine-month-old fetus with its growing capacity to move about and to perceive its own environment.

Although I myself am unequivocally pro-life, I do not believe, as some pro-lifers do, that it is helpful to equate the destruction of an embryo with what can only be described as the killing of a fetus considerably farther along in the gestational process. Given recent precedent, treating the two cases identically is more likely to weaken the protection of life in its later stages than to strengthen its protection in the earlier stages. Nevertheless, we should not lightly countenance the ending of human life at any stage and should treat even the smallest of human embryos with the honor deserved by creatures made in God's image. Our laws should reflect this honor.

At the end of the day I believe the Bush compromise was the best we could hope for: no more destruction of human embryos, but allow research to continue on existing lines of stem cells where the life and death decisions were already made. It is not a perfect decision, to be sure. But it may be as much as we can expect at present.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.

Editorial

I felt God's love in the bowels

Harry der Nederlanden

God gave me personally a special demonstration of his love this past week. Of course, as a believer I greet every day as a gift of God's love, sometimes a bit woozily and grumpily, but I know life's a gift each day again. And when I hear my wife and kids stirring about the house, on most days I am visited by at least a brief burst of gratitude before I start counting my aches and pains.

I'd been having a few more than usual of those lately. Then, last week a doctor who I'd met for the first time about a week earlier told me I had cancer.

He seemed delighted by the fact that my cancer was located in almost exactly the place it was shown in the huge chart hanging on his office wall. He pointed with his pencil and sat back in his chair and looked at me rather pleasantly. He can't have a very pleasant job, though, for he usually introduces himself to people at the wrong end, and his handshake isn't very pleasant at all.

And periodically he has to tell people like me, "Sorry, but there's good reason for the ache you've been feeling; you've got cancer."

A sense of gratitude

And, silly me, I was filled with a sense of gratitude. I thought, not so much in words as in images, "What a privileged, richly blessed life I've had!" Vague pictures flashed through my mind of the horrific sufferings endured by Christians (and non-Christians) around the world. Gathering news articles for every issue of *Christian Courier* has made me extremely aware of how rare it is to live in the sort of society we have in North America, with its freedom and prosperity, with the opportunities for my children to find fulfilling roles, with liberty to serve God in a multitude of ways.

My wife, Rose, and I have had a happy marriage (except for the times I had to repair the washing machine or dryer; then she hid in the closet), and my children have all been a joy – all four of them. None of them got the colic, none suffered frightening childhood diseases, none required a great deal of butt-whopping (but, then, maybe I've been one of those permissive parents who are light on discipline), none grew particularly rebellious or truculent as teenagers (in fact, I have found them to be more interesting then). Just these few things are already a lot to be thankful for.

I've also had the mixed blessing of studying at six different colleges or universities and reading shelves of books. I've even translated several and been able to do some writing myself. And I've always been able to find gainful employment of some benefit to somebody.

A rather odd reaction

I didn't actually sit in the doctor's office gazing at his pleasant face counting my blessings, but that's the sensation that washed over me like the sunlight filtering through the blinds into his office. It wasn't bright sunlight, mind you, and I didn't hear organ music or chimes like in a cheesy spiritual movie. But you have to admit that it's a rather odd reaction to have to the news that you have cancer and some stranger is going to be snipping at your guts.

Maybe some of you pop-psychology types out there are murmuring, "He's in denial," or: "Just wait till it sinks in."

I prefer to think God just did me a kindness.

I'm not in the habit of claiming visitations or supernatural interventions. Mostly because I don't believe that God goes off meandering about the cosmos counting his distant galaxies and has to return every now and again to see what's going on in my life. When he poured out his Spirit, it wasn't so that a select few of us could stand up yodelling in church every now and again. It was so that he could weave himself into the daily bob and shuffle, grumble and wow of our lives. He's there for us as much in our mopping, rushing about and sleeping as in our prayer and meditation.

God showed me his love

On Sunday, when I heard myself prayed for from the pulpit and when I received the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper, God also showed me his love, and also in the encouragement and the hugs Rose and I got after church. Incidentally, I really didn't look forward to all that mushy stuff. There's something in me that still admires a level of stoicism. (Maybe that's what I get from growing up with too many comic book westerns.) I hate blubbering in public, but I do appreciate people praying for me. It's no little thing. When I promise to pray for someone, I'm afraid that half the time I forget or fall asleep before I get that far. Marathon prayers are beyond me; I'm strictly a sprinter.

Rose pointed out a news story about research that was conducted recently into the efficacy of prayer. It turns out that those who were prayed for in this study had a much better rate of cure than those who didn't, whether they were aware of it or not. Maybe it would be a good idea to invest in prayer teams as well as medical teams. Come to think of it, didn't we do that in the Middle Ages till Luther came along?

Cynical secularists

A more recent study, probably funded by cynical secularists, suggests that believing people whose faith is thrown into crisis by their illness and suffering don't do as well. In other words, a shallow, optimistic theology that doesn't allow for the co-existence of suffering and blessing, pain and providence isn't good for you. So all the cynics did was to show there's a good utilitarian reason for keeping theology vital after all.

Recently, some writers (theologians mostly) have begun making me feel guilty for the time I spent reading theology in the past, almost making me believe that it was just part of my male yen for order and domination. This made me remember my hours on the night shift as a psychiatric aide. Some patient would start bellowing as I was reading my Bavinck, Berkouwer or Brunner, and I'd think, "Oh, shut up and go to sleep; I'm busy studying my theology!" At last, however, that study may bear some fruit. It may be good for my bowels – like prunes.

Of late, we've been getting far too many caricatures of our Reformed theological tradition. It is much less obsessed with abstractions and system-building than rumored. Calvin, Kuyper, Bavinck, Berkouwer, Van Ruler, Hoekema, Spykman and, yes, even Louis Berkhof and Hendrick as well – they've been agents of God's love, not foot patrols of some barbed-wire theology. Their work is as much a work of healing and wholeness as is the work of the doctor who will cut open my stomach to excise the evil that is growing there.

The common miracle of God's presence

I also like to think that the biblical faith, which Reformed theology is committed to keep recovering, also gave rise to medical science, to hospitals and to a political order that provides health care for people without bankrupting them. That is no less important to me now than the hugs and cards of the people of my church. And that, too, is a concrete expression of God's love. My operation will be done in Hotel Dieu – a hospital established by the Roman Catholic Church. It is publicly funded now, but that shouldn't make it any less part of God's hospitality toward us.

All it takes is prayer and the common miracle of God's presence.

Please pray for my family and myself as we fight this disease.

I am glad that I am not required to fight Death as well, for the Bible tells me that Christ Jesus fought that fight already and won. That's why I took the bread and wine last Sunday. As I took it, I realized that it is a feast that joins the church militant and suffering with the church risen and triumphant. For those who eat and drink in faith, it is a celebration on the other side of Death, where its power has been broken and where the life it sustains is life eternal.

Even though the helpings are rather small, it's a feast that's good for the bowels....

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Letter/Opinion/News

God's 'spiritual order' includes elders, deacons, ministers together

I have been following the discussion in *Christian Courier* regarding the place of ministers within church councils in Ontario. This is by no means a new issue for the Ontario churches, but seems to have gained some new momentum within the past few months.

Synod 1997 adopted the "Application for Incorporation for a Corporation without Share Capital under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act" and an "Operating Bylaw re Property" for Canadian Christian Reformed churches. The advice of legal counsel to the Board of Trustees of the CRCNA and through it to synod was that it would be wise for Canadian CRCs "to incorporate pursuant to the *Federal Corporations Acts"* (Acts *of Synod 1997,* pp. 502, 620). Already prior to the meeting of Synod 1997, Industry Canada informed us that "[our] format for standard Application has been approved" *(Acts of Synod 1997,* p. 501).

Following Synod 1997, the Board of Trustees — Canada Corporation worked with legal counsel to develop an extensive Bylaw for our churches. For over two years, the Bylaw has been made available to our churches from my office and electronically on the CRC web site: **(http://www.crcna.org/cr/crrs/crrssynd.htm).** That Bylaw has been reviewed by Industry Canada and they have assigned Identifier number 99-1 to the Bylaw. Furthermore, we have been informed that "local churches need only refer to this number when filing an application for incorporation and bylaw... [and] the approval is automatic."

The above information and details are pertinent for the current discussion, because Bylaw 1:01(k) reads as follows:

"Council" means the Council of the local Church consisting of the Minister(s) (if there be such), the Elders, and the Deacons all of whom are individually deemed to be Directors pursuant to the Act and collectively deemed to be the Board of Directors pursuant to the Act.

Spiritual order God taught us

The wording of the other articles in the Bylaw is consistent with the definitional statement quoted above re the minister, namely that he/she is a full member of council which is also the board of directors.

The Bylaw definition quoted above and Church Order Article 35 (stating that ministers are members of the council) are both grounded in the faith statement of the Belgic Confession. When speaking about "the government of the church," the Belgic Confession (Article 30) says: "We believe this true church ought to be governed according to the spiritual order that our Lord has taught us in his Word. There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments. There should also be elders and deacons, along with the pastors, to make up the council of the church."

This clearly articulates that our tradition believes that God's "spiritual order" as "taught us in his Word" includes elders, deacons, and ministers together in the council of the church. We should not quickly abandon this spiritual and Biblical principle on the basis of a non-legislative ruling by a governmental office or officer. We must remember that the church, throughout its existence, has taken stands against governments when its own spiritual order and biblical foundations were questioned or prohibited. This may be one of those times.

David H. Engelhard
General Secretary of the CRCNA
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Hungary celebrates 1000 years of Christianity

Stefan J. Bos

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY (ANS) — In a speech expected to raise tensions with neighboring countries, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has called for the implementation of "cross border reunification of the Hungarian nation," a clear reference to the two-thirds of territory it lost after World War One.

Orban made the controversial comments in front of the Parliament building in Budapest, as Hungary observed the August 20th National Holiday to commemorate its founder, King St. Stephen, who introduced Christianity here exactly 1,000 years ago.

The event was meant as a more joyful end of 20 months of festivities, ceremonies and prayer services in which Hungary marked its bloodstained and troubled first millennium as a nation. It included several lost wars and lost revolutions, such as the 1956 anti-Communist fight for freedom, which was crushed by the Soviet Union.

Hungarian analyst Tamas S. Kiss, who attended some of the ceremonies, told ASSIST News Service that in a country with so many lost struggles, King St. Stephen is one the most important heroes.

But as the St. Stephen ceremonies began, diplomats from neighboring countries seemed to have few reasons to celebrate, as they listened to Prime Minister Orban's speech. "Until now, to be born as a Hungarian outside Hungary's borders in the Carpathian basin meant a bitter fate — being second-rate, despised, being ridiculed," he said in a televised speech.

Talk of reunification

"From now on we shall implement the cross border reunification of the Hungarian nation," Orban added, referring to the millions of ethnic Hungarians living in nearby nations. The speech seemed to overshadow, but not stop, attempts by Hungarian church leaders to keep politics out of events commemorating Hungary's first King, who received his crown from Pope Sylvester II in the year 1000.

Now, one full millennium later, St. Stephen's crown is on display in the Hungarian Parliament building.

Some Protestant leaders have criticized these kinds of ceremonies, saying that the churches do not need to be reminded of what Christ is doing in His world.

However Pope John Paul II said last week that the country's "deep spiritual conviction should help today's Hungarians to base a prosperous future upon the traditions of the country's Christian past." Despite the Vatican's support for the celebrations, Hungarian opposition politicians have criticized the government for spending millions of dollars on huge millennium festivities.

One event included placing St. Stephen's crown on board a Danube River vessel last week, from where it sailed back and forth to the small town of Esztergom, which is seen as Hungary's Catholic Capital. The centre right Hungarian government has defended the expenditures, saying that the people should celebrate as the country prepares for what many people hope will be a more peaceful millennium for Hungary.

"Neither a family nor a nation can be built with arrogance and hatred," said Imre Szebik, president-bishop of Hungary's Evangelical Church, at a Protestant church service to close the millennium. "We must know that we are not better than any other nation, though we are not worse than the others either," he said.

Stefan J. Bos is Eastern Europe Correspondent for ASSIST News Service

Correction:

In our August 20 issue, on page 6, a photo of Rev. James and Lena Joosse was mistakenly placed with a story about Sipke and Antje Adema. *Christian Courier* regrets this error.

Please don't clone — Joe Clark

Harry der Nederlanden

Joe Clark recently appeared before the cameras to issue an urgent call for a law to ban cloning in Canada. Watching pudgy little Joe shaking his jowls as he scowled to show how serious he was, I too was filled with a sense of alarm. The idea that someday I might be seeing clones of Joe Clark – or Chretien or Day, for that matter — fills me with horror and panic.

This, despite my resolve to honor our leaders. To take onto oneself the responsibilities of office and risk public exposure strikes me as courageous and commendable. Most of the time, I try to ascribe noble, high-falutin motives to our political leaders. Most of them are not in it for the free lunches and travel – or for the opportunity to appear on television looking foolish, even though most of them end up doing just that.

Picture Joe Clark standing beside a clone of himself, who repeats whatever he says with the same exaggerated emphasis and seriousness. The clone becomes a clown. Or perhaps Joe becomes the clown. Who could tell?

There's a great deal of visceral aversion to cloning. No one, except a few pompous, mad-scientist types, likes the idea. But serious leaders like polititicians and preachers are especially opposed to cloning. Why this instinctiversion? Is it because as soon as we see ourselves in duplicate, we see how utterly foolish we look most of the time?

Human uniqueness is precious. When God makes us in his image, he fashions a creature of infinite nobility. When we fashion a replica of ourselves in our own image, we fashion an object of ridicule and folly.

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Poetry/Education

'omygod'

Frank DeVries

"The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: 'Meaningless! Meaningless!' says the Teacher. 'Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.'
(Ecclesiastes 1:1 and 2)

Over the years all languages change. English is no exception. Because languages are always moving they regularly gather new words, and other words become "archaic." I am not a student of linguistics; I don't know much about that. But I am quite intrigued about the appearance of a word which for the past fifteen years or so, perhaps longer, has been a regular visitor to current English usage yet can not be found in any dictionary, including dictionaries available on the web. The word I refer to is "omygod," an obvious contraction of the phrase "O my God."

Biblical use of that phrase

I found that my NIV concordance twice refers to the biblical use of that phrase. However, mine being an abridged concordance, it may well occur more often. In the first instance I found it to be used by the prophet Ezra, in the 6th verse of chapter 9. God had forbidden his people to intermarry with any of the heathen nations around Israel, but that command was disobeyed even by the priests and Levites. It is when Ezra falls on his knees and prays to the Lord God that he, in an admission of guilt on behalf of God's people, utters the phrase in question:

"**O my God**, I am too disgraced and ashamed to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens."

The second instance of the phrase I found in the 22nd verse of Psalm 71, a beautiful Psalm of thankfulness and praise, an uplifting 24-verse-long expression of the psalmist's love for God:

"I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, **O my God**; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel."

Frequent, thoughtless use

By the very frequent but thoughtless common use of the phrase today, it is clear that for those who use it so cavalierly it is void of meaning. Nowhere in its everyday usage is there left any sense of the entreating or glorifying character of the phrase, and so it simply has become an everyday "wow" expression, contracted into the word "omygod."

When Katy shows off to her friend Suzie a new haltertop she purchased, you hear Suzie say it. It is uttered when Bill checks out his lottery ticket and learns he has won a hundred dollars. You hear Mom say it when little Billy hurts himself and shows her his bleeding knee, and it is used by spectators to an earthquake scene, or a mudslide. Not long ago I heard it used by a neighbor lady as she walked into a home that was for sale and she was struck by the interesting layout of the kitchen area, but I also heard it spoken by a little girl who received a puppy for her birthday: "omygodders" are everywhere, and are plentiful. The word is in use all over North America — in the folksmouth, on television shows, in movies, on radio, and used by sports commentators.

Bothersome and hurtful

Since the original meaning of it as used by Ezra and the Psalmist is so poignantly evocative, I find hearing it in such meaningless ways bothersome, and hurtful. Each time I hear it used in that way it strikes me as a blatant transgression of the third commandment, and wish that people would be more circumspect in their usage of it. However, I do think that is just wishful thinking, for I am pretty sure that those who use it so thoughtlessly do not think, nor probably care, about how this must sadden the Lord.

What is disturbing, though, is that the "O" word is sometimes used by children, but not only by them. I sometimes hear it spoken by older people of the kind one would think to know better. It appears, then, that this is just one more of those undesirable items that insidiously has weaseled its way into today's culture.

I don't have a clue what to do about it, or if it is even necessary or possible to do something about it. Maybe it is just good enough for you and me to be aware of it. The Preacher in Proverbs 16:24 informs us that,

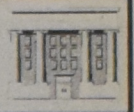
"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

You would think that a meaningful phrase such as "O my God," condensed into a word bereft of meaning, because of its meaninglessness could not possibly have much effect on one. That is not true. For instead of it being experienced as "sweet to the soul and healing to the bones," it feels hurtful. I wish it weren't so used.

Campus ministry in the desert II: L.A. journey

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



After visiting my friend Tony in New Mexico (whom I told you about in my last column), I crawled across a few deserts, canyons, and mountains to reach Los Angeles. Here, in the City of Angels, I met with CRC evangelist Charles Kim, a church planter in the community around the UCLA. The L.A. area used to be mostly desert. But with some fairly elaborate irrigation techniques, that desert has become home to some 10 million people. Yet the desert moniker ought to still fit, as culturally speaking, Los Angeles is about as deep as Hollywood, its suburb. L.A. is like a big campground for about 140 different language groups: a city with no tradition and no centre. L.A. is characterized by a "pastlessness" says my *Let's Go! California guidebook*, "a city where nothing seems more than thirty years old." A historical vacuum where people come to make (or re-make) themselves. Literally, if you peek at the *plethora* of ads for plastic surgery in the local papers.

The desert moniker ought to still fit, as culturally speaking, Los Angeles is about as deep as Hollywood, its suburb.

Broken dreams

Gazing through the smog towards the city from the San Padres mountains to the north, Charles asks me this question: "See any steeples?" "No," I said, surprised. "Just the angel Moroni at the top of the Mormon Temple, the Capitol Records high rise, and one long traffic jam." Charles is a bright, generous, soft-spoken, multi-talented young man. His dream is to see the people living here know the love of God in Christ.

He explains to me that they are a mixture of highly mobile people, superficial feeling/trendy types open to all sorts of spiritual experiences, and ambitious, furiously busy professionals. Put it this way: L.A. is all cell phones and cars. People on the move. "People will step on anyone in the scramble to the top," Charles explained as we got lost in the mansions of Hollywood Hills. Hollywood. The "city of broken dreams."

ChristianJourney.Org

Charles is trying to foster a community where they meet Jesus in a casual, low-key atmosphere. "They can't meet the demands membership in an organized church would put on them," he says. Charles has organized coffee houses, poetry readings, and even helped bring The Veritas Forum, a Harvard-based Christian scholarship conference, to UCLA. Thus, "Journey" was born. It's a name and a worship community that accepts you wherever you are along the spiritual path. Through sophisticated computer graphics (for a sample, check out christianjourney.org) and simple trust built through relationship, Charles hopes to sand down the sceptical attitudes of students and professionals and offer them a place to belong and to serve.

"I think evangelism is not as complicated as we make it out to be," said Charles. It's about building relationships and being authentic, he explained, rather than pushing a product.

He may be first generation Korean (he came from Seoul when he was 14), but he is envisioning a multi-ethnic community. Like L.A.

"I want them to transition well," he says of his flock. "I get satisfaction in knowing that this is ministry with no strings attached." Charles talks about students he has got to know in the last year who already have gone on to medical school in Chicago or New York. They share with him one part of the journey, and then they are gone. "But I hear from some of them again," he adds.

Mustard seed vs. McWorld

Starting a worshipping community like Journey is a highly risky venture. Charles is currently reading some organizational theory like Robert Quinn's *Deep Change* as well as Tom Sine's *Mustard Seed Verses McWorld* —to help him better understand the meaning of the gospel in an accelerating culture.

"Postmodernism isn't a theory for me," he says. "It's the very people I work with."

Charles is hoping to get an MBA on top of the M.Div. he already has from Talbot Seminary (Biola College). "Churches have a lot to learn from organizational theory," he says. "How do companies change? How do they grow? I want to study the administrative side of the MBA." He hopes to grow a self-sufficient church out of his group of 30-40 (now mostly Koreans) in three years.

I admire Charles for his faith, his talents, and his courage. I cannot help but feel, as I spoke to the small Journey group that meets in a comedy theatre beneath his office, that tremor of excitement that comes when something is being born before your eyes.

Read the vision of Journey below, and see if you can't feel it, too:

It's our dream to be a church that actively reaches out to post-moderners in West Los Angeles, inviting them to be devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

It's our dream to be a place where people discover God through Jesus Christ and are transformed by the Good News.

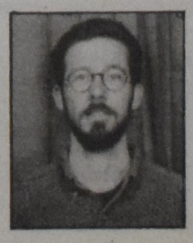
It is our dream to be a safe haven in which people can establish meaningful relationships so they can be real before God and others. It's our dream to be a gathering place for people to find God-given purpose and mission for their life.

It's our dream to be a 300 member church growing and nurturing each other to reach their full potential.

It's our dream to mobilize future global leaders to be equipped with the gospel and release them back to the world.

It's our dream to plant 10 churches for post-moderners near college campuses during the next 10 years.

As we read in Isaiah 35, it is in the dry desert that Kingdom visions come to bloom. Something about its poverty gives such potential. Something in its simplicity gives a special clarity to life. And perhaps it is its stark character that gives birth to such vulnerable, enchanting dreams.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Arts/Media

Ecclesiastes and the media

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Mark Walhberg (right) gets manhandled by an ape in Planet of the Apes.

Ron Vandenburg

Everything is Meaningless

The words of the reviewer: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the reviewer. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

What does man gain from sitting on his couch or going to the theatre?

Movies come and movies go, but Hollywood continues to search for a blockbuster.

All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough for seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

What has come will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here as a comic book, a video game, a '70s TV show or movie in need of a sequel.

Movies are meaningless

I, the Reviewer, devoted myself to study and to explore all that is available at the Cineplex. What a heavy burden Hollywood has laid on men! I have seen all the things that are done under the sun and in the editing room; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

I thought to myself, "Look, I have searched the earth for an original idea." At Cineplex, Theatre 1, I applied myself to understanding the plot of the summer blockbuster *Pearl Harbor*. Unfortunately I had seen this same movie a few years ago. It was called *Titanic*. Borrowing from that other movie disaster, Pearl Harbor makes the audience endure a silly love affair with cardboard characters spouting off every love story cliche available. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer and writer Michael Bay needed to create some characters that movie goers could identify with during their major special effects sequence. When the first hour is completed, it's time for the iceberg... I mean, the Japanese attack. Our heroes run for safety as minor characters die all around them. A ship (U.S.S. Arizona) floods with water as men are trapped down below. Important events where people suffered great tragedy become trivialized in a video-game-style special effects experience, making the story fluff and, in the end, meaningless.

I thought in my heart, " Come now, I will test you with other movie ideas to find out what is good." Scanning the marquee, I saw *Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles, Dr.Dolittle 2, Jurassic Park 3, The Mummy Returns, Scary Movie 2, Planet of the Apes* and *Rush Hour 2*. Saddened, I realized that Hollywood is too scared to put money into new ideas and relies on familiarity to sell box office.

Along with *Cats and Dogs, Tomb Raider, A.I.*, and *Final Fantasy: the Spirits Within*, I saw that summer movies rely mostly on gimmicks and special effects to hold the audiences. Strong acting performances and good writing are being replaced by computer graphics and animatronics. Mel Gibson, Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington and Tom Cruise all stayed home. Much to the chagrin of these movie actors, computer generated characters such as *Final Fantasy*'s Dr. Aki Ross may need their own category at the next Oscars.

For the summer blockbusters will not be long remembered; in days to come they will be forgotten. And forever piled in $5 bins at Blockbuster. All are Fast and Furious, full of fluff and folly. And all folly is meaningless.

Television is meaningless

"Look," says the Reviewer, "this is what I have discovered: Adding one thing to another to discover the scheme of the summer television season, this only have I found: God made man upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."

Much to the chagrin of these movie actors, computer generated characters such as Final Fantasy*'s Dr. Aki Ross (above) may need their own category at the next Oscars.*

Searching for anything to attract viewers from their summer activities or, even worse, cable alternatives, the networks are scheming desperately to claim something unique and different. To find that unique and different idea, they have gone back to anything that once attracted viewers.

The network executives see that reality television has lower production cost with a higher profit margin if successful. That's why in the middle of an African summer they are taping *Survivor 3* to come to us this fall.

Chris Tucker (left) and Jackie Chan sink to a new low in Rush Hour 2.

Anything to get positive ratings

And so "reality" crowds the networks. *Fear Factor* is *Survivor* with only the competitive challenges, rocketing on a bungee cord, eating buffalo testicles or being surrounded by rats. There's no sitting by the fire and arguing with each other here – too boring. Contestants get $50,000 if they survive three stunts per episode. Each episode concludes with a winner, so there's none of the weekly commitment that other reality television demands. Receiving high network ratings, *Fear Factor* still only registers six million viewers out of a possible 102 million television households in the U.S. A clear sign that network television is willing to put on anything to get any positive ratings.

CBS has brought back the dismal *Big Brother* show (think *Survivor* in an Ikea showroom), promising sex and controversy. These executives got more than they could handle when a male contestant put a knife to the throat of a female contestant.

NBC offered *SpyTV* as *Candid Camera* for the new millennium. Translation: Now we will do really mean stuff, including revenge on your friends and enemies.

Fox offered *Murder in Small Town X*, a continuing series with a group of amateur sleuths to solve a made up crime with actors playing all the suspicious townsfolk.

Greed, Pride, Envy, Sloth, Anger, Lust, Guttony and Reality TV. All are meaningless.

The conclusion of the matter

Seeing that all summer movies and television were unimaginative ways of desperate people to attract the 18-to-49 year demographic, I, the Reviewer, turn to the final words of Ecclesiastes:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

Off to university – but don't forget the duct tape!

Calvin College

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Recently the Admissions office at Calvin College surveyed current Calvin students to find out what items they wished they had brought their first semester. Here are their top 10 things they didn't bring, but should have.

1. a window fan (the overwhelming winner!)
2. decorations and pictures from home
3. a hot pot
4. a pre-paid phone card
5. an answering machine
6. a beach towel or blanket for outside
7. duct tape
8. roller blades and frisbee
9. sewing kit and tool kit
10. a camera

Church

Hostage pastor released unharmed in Colombia

Deann Alford

AUSTIN, Texas (Compass) — Colombian pastor Enrique Gomez was released unharmed on August 11 after being held hostage for six months by Colombian guerrillas.

Melida Gomez, the pastor's wife, said that the family has no plans to leave their homeland now that her husband is free. "We want Colombia to be known as a country where the power of the Spirit of God is moving," said Mrs. Gomez.

Her husband plans to continue as pastor of Bogota's 18,000-member Bethesda Missionary Centre and part-owner of Authentic Radio, a chain of eight Christian radio stations in Colombia. "We'll never leave the country. Here we have a special work, a huge work for Colombia."

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's (FARC) 42nd Front announced on August 10 that it planned to free Gómez in the country's southeastern mountain zone in Cundinamarca, the province where he was kidnapped on February 14, 2001. Bogota's *El Tiempo* newspaper reported that he walked almost two hours down a mountain where he had been held. Some tarped trucks picked him up and then left him at the side of a highway where he met his family.

Rich in faith, not money

When asked why her husband was kidnapped, she said, "He moves multitudes of people, and his is one of the biggest churches in Colombia. [The FARC] believed he was very rich in money, but as he told the press, he's rich in faith and powerful in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gomez family told *El Tiempo* that no ransom was paid for his release.

Gomez was shackled for the first two months of his captivity with a chain and stick. To sleep, the rebels gave him a tarp, a blanket and a little tent. Gomez told *El Tiempo* that his captors moved him to at least 10 locations in the mountains during the six months they held him and that he had lost 44 pounds, but that they always treated him respectfully.

"I'm very happy because God kept my health and helped me to get here," Gomez told his church.

Mrs. Gomez insisted that the family, consisting of seven children, isn't worried that FARC will target her husband again.

"[FARC] can't control the great work that the Lord is doing in Colombia," she said. "We'll keep working with greater intensity. This united the church with other missions and denominations in Colombia. Now we're stronger and greater in number in the Lord."

Thirty killed in religious conflict in Nigeria

Obed Minchakpu

TAFAWA BALEWA, Nigeria (Compass) — At least 30 Christians were killed during a June outbreak of violence between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria's Bauchi state.

More than 158 Christian-owned houses were burned, along with two churches and a Bible school belonging to the Church of Christ in Nigeria, according to a statement signed by four leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

Governor accused of masterminding killings

The religious clashes began after Governor Muazu of Bauchi state declared that Islamic (sharia) law applied to all persons in the state, not Muslims only. On June 4, the governor assigned an Islamic court judge to Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro Local Government Areas to enforce Islamic law in the predominantly Christian villages.

The four Christian leaders, Rev. Markus Musa, Rev. Canon H.A. Eluwa, Michael Lulu and Yunusa Manzo, accused the governor of masterminding the Christian killings.

"He knew well that Christians were slaughtered at a roadblock at Zwall and Burgel villages by Muslim jihadists. Yet, to date he did nothing about it," the Christian leaders claimed.

Christian opposition to the adoption and implementation of the Islamic legal code began two years ago when the Bauchi State House of Assembly made known its intention to enact a bill to declare an Islamic state.

In Abuja, Nigeria's capital city, a popular Nigerian Christian preacher, James Abdulkarim Yahaya, was killed on August 6 when four men, suspected to be Muslim fundamentalists, broke into his bedroom apartment as he slept and shot him.

"We normally do not close our door at night because of the unbearable heat and the poor ventilation," said Mohammed Abdulrahman, a Muslim roommate of Yahaya. "So, the gunmen just swept into the room and shot dead the evangelist at a very close range."

Christian leaders in Nigeria believe the preacher was killed as a result of his conversion from Islam to Christianity several years ago. Under sharia, the Islamic legal system, any convert from Islam must be killed.

Twenty Nigerian churches demolished for 'environmental' concerns

Obed Minchakpu

KANO, Nigeria (Compass) — On July 20 church buildings were demolished in Kano city of northern Nigeria by the Kano State Environmental Planning and Protection Agency (KASEPPA) after the agency claimed the churches failed to comply with environmental laws.

According to church leaders in Kano, government bulldozers carried out the demolition of the churches, most of which had existed for more than 20 years.

Other churches may be next targets

Rev. Gabriel Ojo of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) said that other church buildings may be the next targets of the Islamic government in the state.

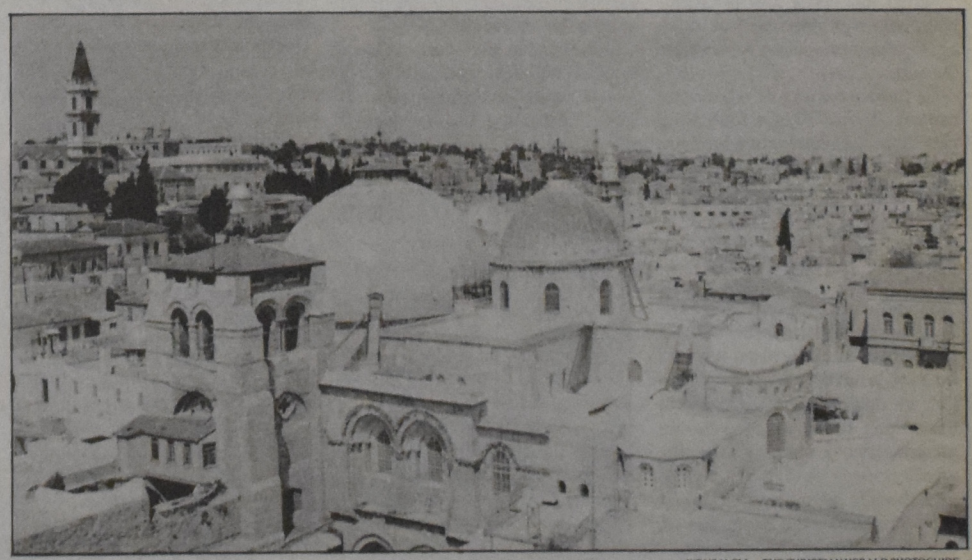
However, the managing director of KASEPPA told Compass that the demolition of the churches was not done to persecute Christians, but to sanitize the state's environment.

"This exercise is not meant to witch-hunt or persecute Christians in the state as it was carried out in good faith," he said. "All we are doing is sanitizing the entire environment by demolishing all illegal structures that have no valid certificates of occupancy, and these churches don't have such valid documents."

Rev. Ojo disagreed, saying, "The structures that are marked 'illegal' by the government, we have since discovered, are all churches. Not a single structure belongs to any Muslim. So you can see how the Kano state government is persecuting us."

The churches have not acquired valid documents for the properties, Ojo said, because their efforts have been thwarted by the Muslim-controlled state government, which brands the churches as "illegal structures" just to have them demolished.

Amid fears for future, Jerusalem's churches embark on prayers for peace



JERUSALEM — THE CHRISTIAN HERALD PHOTOGUIDE

The Christian quarter of the old city of Jerusalem, with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the centre.

JERUSALEM (ENI) — Churches in Jerusalem have embarked on a week of prayers dedicated to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that some observers fear may escalate into a new Middle East war.

The decision was taken by the heads of the churches in Jerusalem, amid rising concern about the violence in the region. Warning that "hatred and a desire for revenge is rampant on both sides — Israeli and Palestinian," the church leaders issued an appeal to "all our people, throughout this land, to join us in intensifying our prayers for peace, with justice, and reconciliation."

Church

Christians surrounded in central Indonesia

Alex Buchan

LONDON (Compass) — A "second Ambon" is brewing in Indonesia according to Christian leaders as a 3,000-strong Muslim jihad force closes in on 28,000 Christians in Tentena, Central Sulawesi. Ambon refers to an area in eastern Indonesia where thousands have died in Muslim-Christian conflicts.

"If we do not get help soon, thousands of Christians will cease to exist by year's end," said a pastor from the area.

Tentena is a town of 5,000 people normally, but is swollen by Christians fleeing the menace of the jihad force in the entire Poso district.

Sporadic fighting

More than 12 million people live on Sulawesi, a large spidery-shaped island in the middle of the archipelago that makes up Indonesia, Asia's third largest country. The island is 70 per cent Muslim with a large — mainly Protestant — Christian minority of around 25 per cent.

In April 2000, sporadic fighting between Christians and Muslims broke out in the central part of the island. Since June of this year, a strike force of at least 2,000 so-called "jihad warriors" have "cleansed" the town of Poso and the surrounding district of Christians.

According to a Jakarta-based expert, "The military strategy of the jihad force is to cut off communication between the Toraja Christians living in the northern part of the neighboring South Sulawesi province and the Christians in North Sulawesi. Once that is achieved, they plan to concentrate on attacking the Christian stronghold of northern Sulawesi."

Christians have fled

Christians in the area have fled to Tentena, the only Christian town left. Some Christians have formed a 2,000-member militia, called the "Red Force," to fight off the Muslim extremists.

"We cannot count on government forces to protect us as we have seen time and again the police especially have joined the jihad forces," said a Tentena pastor.

Pastors from the area have requested international help to avoid a bloodbath.

Violent atrocities

A recent atrocity involved a police elite force attacking a Christian village elder and his family on June 27, according to a July 9 Open Doors news release. A woman neighbor, five months pregnant, was killed in the attack. When Christians went to the local police station to complain, all the police had fled.

In another incident in June also reported by Open Doors, a Christian doctor had his ears cut off by Muslim vigilantes. Named Dr. Benny, he was on a tour of duty when his car was stopped by a group of people in Kayamaia, just outside Poso city. He was forced out of his car to answer questions. When they realized he was a Christian, they beat him up and cut off both his ears. A passerby who was a former patient intervened on his behalf, pleading that he was a good man who selflessly served the community. The crowd let Dr. Benny go, and with his head pouring blood and in excruciating pain, he tried to find his ears, but he could find only one. He is now recovering in a hospital in Palu.

In a separate incident, a pastor's wife had a leg amputated after sustaining injuries from a bomb thrown by a man from a motorcycle in the parking lot of Christ Alpha Omega Tabernacle Bethel Church in Semarang, central Java. Susana Hilda Riyanti, 50, the wife of church pastor Timotius Subekti, had just driven into the parking lot on Tuesday, July 31, when the attack took place.

Urging communities to stay calm

Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist leaders all met August 1 at the Java Christian Church offices in Semarang and issued a statement urging their communities to stay calm and not be provoked into violence by the bombing.

All these incidents took place against a backdrop of great political drama in Jakarta, as the country's first democratically-elected president since the Suharto era, Abdurrahman Wahid, was removed from office and replaced by 54-year-old Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's founding leader, Sukarno.

Sworn in on July 23, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* labeled her a "puppet president" in their August 2 issue, expressing fears that she will represent rather than confront establishment and military factions that prospered under former president Suharto.

More worrying for Christians is her need to court Muslim parties. She named Mr. Haz, the leader of a conservative Muslim party, as her vice-president. It is not known whether Haz favors the imposition of Islamic sharia law in Indonesia — a cherished goal among Muslim extremists.

Christians are being killed, but is it persecution?

Alex Buchan

"If you build your church next to a temple, then I don't think you are making friends. And if a Christian kills a Muslim, and a Muslim kills a Christian in revenge, that's not persecution. It's civil war!"

Speaking to Christians in Sri Lanka last year, Brother Andrew was musing on the big unasked question surrounding persecution, namely, when do Christians deserve it? When Christians are "overbold," where aggression has overwhelmed discretion, can the subsequent, strong response they have provoked be described as "persecution?"

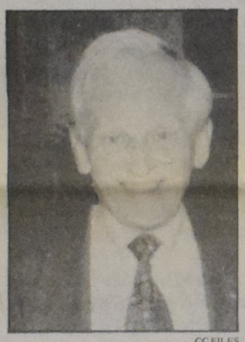
We all know that "persecution" refers only to when Christians suffer for Christ's sake. But in practice, this is not easy to discern. Are the Christians who threw down the gauntlet by building a church next to a Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka so unwise that the resulting threats, stonings and subsequent demolition of the church constitute exactly what they deserved? The liberal hierarchy of the church certainly thought so and refused to list it as a persecution case.

Persecution or civil war?

The issue is tricky, the more so because there is no commonly accepted definition of what constitutes persecution. It gets very messy. Much of the killing on Ambon, Indonesia, particularly in 1999, was carried out by Christians who slaughtered Muslims without mercy. Why else would the 100,000 refugees that fled the area by mid-2000 be 99 per cent Muslim? So when a Muslim jihad force arrived to take revenge, were they coming to "persecute" defenseless Christians or continue a "civil war"?

It gets even more complicated. When they arrived, there is no doubt that they targeted some of the Christian perpetrators of the violence against Muslims, but in the main, they have contented themselves with terrorizing Christian villagers who never took any part in the fighting. So there was civil war and persecution side by side!

Also, are those Christians who killed Muslims really true Christians? And what if those Christians killed were not practicing Christians? Are they martyrs or not? All we can say is that we have cases of genuine persecution within an overall scenario of civil war.



CC FILES

Brother Andrew

Unprovoked persecution

Brother Andrew cuts through these complications, however, with a single test. He declares, "If opposition comes after Christians have tried every way to be friends, then that is persecution." That is how we know it is "for Christ's sake." It is unprovoked.

That helps us somewhat, but it still does not take care of every situation. If a Christian preacher in India gently tells a Hindu he is a "sinner," is that a shocking insult to a sacred faith and deserving of punishment, or is he quite within his rights to proselytize?

We have to live with the fact that persecution is complicated and probably getting more so. There are difficulties of identification, as we have seen. There are also mistakes of extrapolation, where single incidents of persecution are extrapolated out and said to be the norm, i.e., all Christians in China are being beaten up for their faith.

These complications come because persecution, like everything else, is bound up with politics. Some groups hype it up to raise funds. Others deny it is going on to save face. Varieties of interpretations result in all sorts of contradictory definitions of whether it is happening and to whom. Pray that we will learn to live with these complications so that persecuted Christians are served rather than used.

Alex Buchan, Compass Direct Asia Bureau Chief, kept a diary on his travels in 2000, keeping an ear open for the universal wisdom and challenge of those persecuted for their faith in Christ. He shares this wisdom in the form of quotes.

Food..? For Thought..??

When the tidal waves of life-threatening force may engulf us, we have at least two options:

ONE: To allow ourselves to be swept away by the waves and then to deal with the destruction, or

TWO: To learn to surf and ride the crest of the waves to safety and life, enjoying the process!

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So Someone There Could See You

He voiced it then after the dark threatening clouds had moved past
the crunch-dry hay being baled that they were lucky and his father
had replied not lucky someone must have been praying

she had put out a line to God the drive home dialogue
as she watched the purple darkness between lake and farm.
edging by the hayfield or not

"if you are not too busy" she had said but wanted to retract
busy having to do with fitting things into a schedule
God not ruled by time having made it and space
with word and breath six days evening and morning

"would you consider with a breath to move the clouds
past the hayfield for this day" she asked
"so someone there could see you"

Linda Siebenga

HORST EHRICHT

The smell of rain

the smell of rain is the smell of earth
the dark rich
yields pungent secrets
bits of life in your nostrils
stolen aromas of spruce sap and black willow bark

soaking life-giving event
listen to it river dance on the roof
kick heels against the window pane
to the clapping rhythm of the trees

let the raindrops run down your face
drip from your eyebrows

let them wash away the cobwebs of inertia
plant seeds of angels in your brain

when the yellow finch flits
near raindrops
dangling on purple columbines
let the chorus of birds songs fill your ears
as the smell of the earth
alive in your nostrils
sends forth praise from your lips
rising to heaven
like the smell of new rain

Linda Siebenga

1955: a recent but far-removed experience

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE

I recently tore a piece of plaster and lath from an upstairs room wall in our old farmhouse and opened a door to the past. Inside the wall were some pages from the *Family Herald* and *Weekly Star* dated 1955. That was the year I graduated from high school and it seems not long ago. The memories are fresh in my mind. Browsing through those papers, however, I now barely recognize the world in which I once lived.

More neighborly and trusting

Almost everything has changed and not necessarily for the good. From the pages of the *Family Herald*, I glean that society then was less expensive, less complicated, more neighborly and more trusting. People generally enjoyed life more.

Published prices indicate less of a cost/price or cost/wage squeeze in 1955. A highly productive, well-established 240-acre farm in Wellington County, Ontario was listed for sale at $20,500. Or how about 19 acres with a waterfront home on the B.C. coast and a "matchless view" for $8,000? Nylons were one cent per pair, men's socks six pair for $1.00, denim jeans two pair for $5.00, and a variety of ladies leather shoes went for $1.99 per pair.

The *Family Herald* itself was a bargain. The subscription rate was low ($1.50 per year), and the paper was crammed full of useful information, thoughtful instruction and entertaining reading. By today's standards, surprisingly little space was devoted to advertising.

The paper provided homebodies with both an education and diversion for whiling the time away. Rural people did not do much traveling back then. Paved highways were rare and not every country road was graveled. It was news in my small town when neighbors took a day trip 50 miles to Medicine Hat or an overnight 120 miles to Calgary. Books were serialized in the paper and there were always short stories as well.

Well-crafted writing

The writing, including that done by subscribers, was well crafted. It could hold the reader's attention whether imparting useful information or telling a story. *Family Herald* content was mature in that it challenged the intellect. Readers were not insulted by the presumption adult material had to be characterized by sex or violence, nor were children talked down to. It was an excellent publication for families. Word choice by the various authors and editors indicates that the vocabulary of the readers might have exceeded that of the average person in 2001. Words such as "lugubrious", "limned" and "nebula" crop up here and there as normal fare.

There was no watering down of religion either. The spiritual element was strong and overt. *The Quiet Hour,* where a clergyman presented the Christian gospel, was a regular whole page feature. In addition, writers elsewhere in the paper often mentioned the work of God or church attendance or Sabbath observance.

Given the publisher's obvious religious and moral bias, it is interesting how crudities were handled. For instance, where a ruffian in a story used coarse language it was substituted with "(unmentionable)". The Duchess, tough old auntie of Red Ryder, cowboy comic book hero, reveals her hard-bitten nature by using language such as "consarn" and "dagnabit".

Our modern overblown concern for "political correctness" seems virtually absent in the *Family Herald*. The most blatant example of that, again in the comics, was the character Little Beaver, Red Ryder's side-kick, who had a feather stuck in a band around his head, was dressed in a blanket, carried a bow and quiver of arrows and said things like, "Look-um! Him leave note letter! Me know his hand-write-um!".

Modern oddity

The modern oddity this 1955 paper would be has taken me by surprise. Though its content is familiar to me from my days growing up on a prairie ranch, there is really nothing like it today. It was a national paper published in Montreal with a rural focus, a distinctly British flavor and a Protestant Christian bias. It did not cater to the sensational or to advertisers in order to sell papers, but was service-oriented.

How did the publishers manage? The political incorrectness and the religious bias represented the culture of the day. But how did they for decades produce a substantial weekly paper and distribute it all across Canada with minimal advertising and low subscription rates? The fact that it is no longer happening with any publication indicates much about present day culture.

I hope to learn more when I move my archeological dig down to the main floor, which was finished in 1929.

Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

Food..? For Thought..??

Asking troubled people for help with our own problems often results in mutual sharing, bringing healing to them and us.

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News

U.S. religious leaders divided over Bush's stem cell decision

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK (ENI) — United States President George W. Bush has received both praise and criticism from U.S. religious leaders for his decision to allow limited U.S. federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

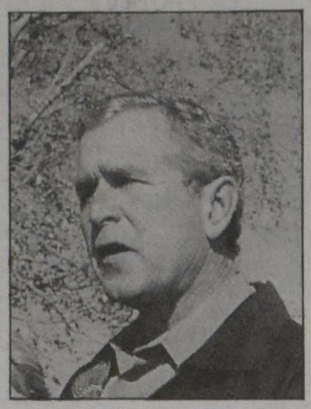
In a television address on August 9, President Bush reversed an election campaign pledge to ban the scientific use of human embryos by announcing that federal funds could be used, under strict conditions, for stem cell research.

Stem cells are cells that are capable of growing into different kinds of human cells, such as liver, skin or nerve cells. A human embryo, a few days old, can be used to create a "reservoir" of stem cells, which is called a stem cell line.

Serious ethical implications

Many scientists argue that embryonic stem cell research can help in medical battles against such diseases as juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. However, removing stem cells destroys the embryo, and the issue therefore has serious ethical implications.

President Bush's decision has been strongly criticized by the country's Roman Catholic Church, but has received support from mainstream Protestants, and from the leader of the conservative Christian Coalition.



CHARLES OMMANNEY - SABA FOR *TIME*

American President George W. Bush: a deliberate, cautious decision on stem-cell research.

In his first televised address to the nation since being sworn in as president in January, President Bush said he would permit federal funding for research for a reported 60 "lines" of stem cells already created from embryos.

He also supported funding for non-embryonic stem cell research, such as on cells derived from adults. But he refused to allow federal funding for research that would result in any further "harvesting" of stem cells from tens of thousands of embryos now frozen at U.S. fertility clinics.

Federal funding is crucial for much medical research in the United States, which is why the president's announcement was so significant.

In his television address, President Bush said he made his decision deliberately and cautiously.

Slippery slope of moral concern

In an August 12 article in *The New York Times*, President Bush said: "Stem cell research takes place on a slippery slope of moral concern where much biomedical research is and will be conducted. We must keep our ethical footing. Government has a clear duty to promote scientific discovery — and a duty to define certain boundaries."

Some of the strongest criticism of President Bush's decision has come from the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza. He likened the existing stem cells to "ill-gotten goods" that had made the US government complicit in what he called "wrongdoing". "The trade-off he [President Bush] has announced is morally unacceptable," Fiorenza said in a statement. "The federal government, for the first time in history, will support research that relies on the destruction of some defenceless human beings for possible benefit to others."

However, the president's decision was praised by a key figure in his own denomination, the United Methodist Church, one of the biggest Protestant denominations in the United States.

In a statement issued on August 10, Jim Winkler, chief executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, said that President Bush's decision "provides a space to explore the potential of embryonic stem cell research without destroying [any more] human embryos".

In a letter sent to President Bush last month, Winkler said the destruction of "human embryos for the sole purpose of carrying on scientific research that promises only the possibility of potential treatments with little concrete evidence of success raises profound and disturbing moral and ethical issues".

The United Methodist Church has not taken a formal position on the issue of embryonic stem cell research. However, the denomination has called for a ban on cloning human embryos, as well as on research that it said "generates waste embryos".

Pat Robertson — the influential president of the conservative Christian Coalition, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and a one-time Republican presidential candidate — also praised Bush's decision. He said the president had provided "an elegant solution to the thorny issue of stem cell research by firmly protecting the rights of the unborn while allowing potentially life-saving research to go forward."

New phase of social ethics

Larry Rasmussen, who teaches social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, told ENI that the decision on stem cell research and the debate that surrounded it were evidence of a "new phase" in the field of social ethics.

"When you work on the basic building blocks of life itself, that ratchets up the social consequences considerably," Rasmussen said.

However, "social justice questions", such as the issue of access to any medical advances derived from stem cell research, had not been heard in the current debate, said Rasmussen, a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"Is the market going to determine who has the access to these medical advances?" Rasmussen asked. "You also don't have the voices of minority communities in the circles of bioethics, where questions of race, class and gender are not being asked."

The fact that a number of stem cell lines were owned by medical companies, he added, might mean that the field was "wide open for corporate funding" of stem cell research, something that could lead to new ethical questions.

India's churches reject suggestions that they are engaged in 'conversion'

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI, (ENI) — Remarks by India's prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, appearing to suggest that Indian Christians are engaged in "conversion" have led to angry scenes in parliament and have been condemned by churches.

The controversy broke out following remarks by the prime minister in which he was reported to say that although "missionaries are engaged in laudable work, some have a conversion motive which is not proper."

Strong objections

There were angry scenes in parliament on Monday when opposition members, led by Congress party leader Priyaranjan Dash Munshi, raised strong objections to the prime minister's remarks.

Unease about the remarks has been heightened by the fact that the prime minister chose to make them at a ceremony at his official residence in New Delhi. The ceremony marked the publication of a book about a leader of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the "national volunteer corps", a prominent Hindu nationalist organization.

The prime minister's party, Bharatiya Janata Party, which governs India at the head of a 19-party coalition, is linked to the RSS, which many Christians allege is engaged in anti-Christian activities.

Highly sensitive issue

The issue of whether or not Indian churches are engaged in conversion is highly sensitive. Mainstream churches reject the idea that their social or educational programs are intended to be a vehicle for the conversion of people of other faiths.

They also fear that suggestions that they are engaged in conversion are being used to promote intolerance at a time of increasing anti-Christian violence.

Half a dozen instances of anti-Christian violence have been reported since July, including the shooting of a nun near Ujjain in central India and the assault on a Catholic priest near Mumbai by Hindu fundamentalists.

"Instead of reassuring the harassed Christians, it is unfortunate that the prime minister is making statements encouraging the fundamentalists," Vijayesh Lal, spokesperson of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, told ENI.

V. S. Lall, vice-president of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and the general secretary of the Church of North India, told ENI that Vajpayee's remarks were "unbecoming for the prime minister of a secular country."

The prime minister should have shown "greater sensitivity" to the sentiments of the minority communities, he added.

In a statement released recently, Catholic bishops in the north of India said that they were "deeply distressed at reports in which Prime Minister Vajpayee alleges that Christian missionaries are making conversions in the guise of service."

"Our anxiety is more because the statement has been made at the function lauding the RSS and in the presence of those political leaders who are leading the hate campaign against the Christian community in India," the statement said.

Such remarks appeared to condone "lies and half-truths that are being spread in many parts of the country designed to curtail our social inputs in education, health and the uplift of marginalized segments [of society]," the Catholic bishops added.

10 tips to keep the winter chill out

(NC)—When the cool fall breeze starts to blow, it's time to think about getting your home ready for the winter months ahead. The following tips from the Canadian Oil Heat Association will not only keep you toasty this winter, but keep your energy costs down as well:

1. Preset your system's thermostat to lower the temperature in the evenings and daytime if no one is home. This alone will cut your costs by as much as 10 per cent.
2. Keep your furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted. Clean or replace the filter regularly.
3. Close off heating or cooling to rooms and areas that don't need it.
4. Keep your radiator or vents clear of dust and dirt. These items can obstruct your vents and make your system work harder.
5. If your heating system is old and inefficient, you may want to replace it. Year after year of savings overrides the initial payout, and a high-efficiency oil-fired burner will cut costs by as much as 25 per cent a year.
6. Clean your ducts. It will improve indoor air quality and airflow so your furnace doesn't have to work as hard.
7. Check windows and doors and block any drafts.
8. Insulate attic access and trap doors.
9. Repair any holes in the roof, walls, doors, ceilings, windows and floors.
10. Install storm windows.

For more energy-saving tips, please contact the Canadian Oil Heat Association, 905-946-0264 or visit www.newoilheat.com

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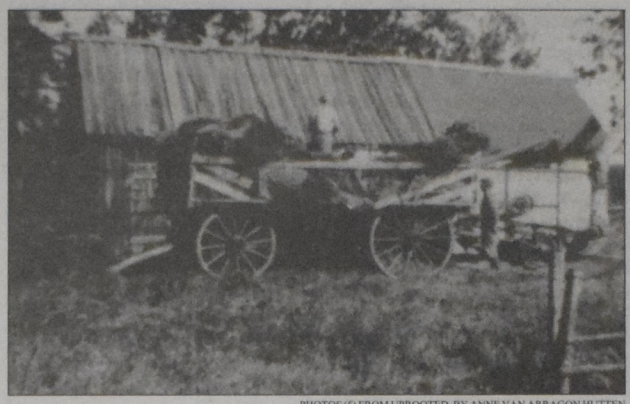
- *News Canada*

Roots

Dutch kids uprooted

Sonya Jones

Anne Van Arragon Hutten has accomplished what many academic writers only dream of: she has produced a well-researched, scholarly book that rivets the reader's attention from beginning to end. She has a natural, unself-conscious style that describes in vivid language the emotional trauma that Dutch children experienced when they were uprooted from their homeland to resettle in Canada with their families in the 1950s.



PHOTOS (5) FROM UPROOTED, BY ANNE VAN ARRAGON HUTTEN

A good number of books have been written about Dutch immigration in general, but Van Arragon focuses particular attention on the "Dutch Kids," as she calls them, for they have been largely overlooked in previous accounts. A young person's story, however, cannot be told without reference to the parents, many of whom found themselves in circumstances that were considerably worse than those they had left behind. The respondents quoted in the book frequently speak about their parents' brave struggle to provide for their huge families.

Unshakable determination

"The first house we lived in was used as a chicken coop," Mary Dekker relates. "There were six inches of manure throughout the house, no water, no hydro, no washroom facilities and every window in the house was broken. With a shovel and broom we had to clean it out. Josy slept in a suitcase. My dad found a well near the house and a rope so we could get some water. When the landlord saw that we found a rope that was his, he took it. Mother was very homesick. She said if she could crawl back over the ocean she would."

Not all the Dutch immigrants had to cope with such straitened conditions, but life was not easy for any of them. Most worked around the clock, held on with grim tenacity, and exhibited an unshakable determination to succeed in their new life. Although they rarely complained about their difficulties, many of the parents were stressed to the breaking point as they sought to make their way in a country whose language they did not speak and whose customs they did not understand.

Few can appreciate what these courageous Dutch immigrants faced better than their children, a fairly substantial cohort now approaching retirement age. As they look back on those early years in their adoptive country they remember their parents with respect, but many recall the older generation's strict and authoritarian approach to child rearing with a touch of bitterness.

An authoritarian environment

"If there was one thing we were taught well it was to do as we were told," states the author. "Our opinions were rejected and our initiatives were squelched. As a result, some of us have had trouble making responsible decisions in life, especially with regard to interpersonal relationships. A few of us have coasted along on our parents' model, but I believe most have tried to change the patterns of our youth. This process would take many years. Years of social isolation within an authoritarian environment are not undone overnight."

As the children grew older and grappled with difficulties of their own, they developed new insights into their parents' plight. "Many immigrant children have also come to recognize their own failures," the author continues. "This leads them to display more charity when recalling their parents' weaknesses. Had we been subject to all the pressures our parents underwent, would we have done a whole lot better?"

Laissez-faire approach

Some parents, of course, used a more relaxed, laissez-faire approach in raising their children. These were typically from Catholic backgrounds, which led one of the author's respondents to speculate that Catholicism was perhaps a more forgiving religion. Another respondent suggested that the Dutch Catholics tend to be from Brabant, a southern province where "conviviality and a generosity of spirit are well-known characteristics."

"Some people have traced the difference between north and south, which to some extent is also the difference between Protestant and Catholic, back to Roman times," writes Van Arragon. "It is thought that Romans drew their upper boundary at the Rhine, the massive waterway that cuts across Holland from east to west."

Interesting as these speculations may be, the author sums up this chapter nicely by quoting Rev. David Kromminga in a sermon presented to All Nations CRC in Halifax. "If you grew up with severe or perfectionist parents or in a home in which you were constantly weighed in the balance and found wanting because of your performance as a person, you will have to remind yourself every single day of your life that there is

no condemnation in Christ Jesus. God holds the ultimate measuring stick."

This is a book that is well worth reading. It is full of interesting information about a hard-pressed community of Christian believers struggling to put down new roots in a country whose citizens were often warm and welcoming but sometimes condescending to their new neighbors. One's heart goes out to the sober, hard-working Dutch immigrant parents and their dutiful, long-suffering (albeit occasionally rebellious) children. Written with incisive intelligence by a talented writer, the book leaves the reader wanting to learn more about the Dutch Canadian community that contributed so much to its adoptive land.

"Uprooted: Dutch immigrant children in Canada 1947-1959" can be purchased for $27.00 (postage not included) by writing: Anne Van Arragon Hutten, 161 Thorpe Road, Kentville, Nova Scotia B4N 3V7. Telephone: 902-678-7088; e-mail: **Vanarragon@ns.sympatico.ca**

Uprooted: the boat, the train, arrival, the house and school

For those who belong to the lucky immigrant generation it describes, Hutten's book is a wonderful volume to browse through and allow the stories she has compiled to stimulate their own memories. Perhaps even to write them down. As a supplement to Sonia Jones' review and to whet your appetite, I've excerpted passages here and there, especially from the first half of the book. But these are only a few pages out of nearly 300, and most CC readers will enjoy this book hugely. It will also undoubtedly stimulate a lot of reflection and discussion about what those times were really like and what was going on beneath the surface.

If my own experience is any indication, readers will also frequently find themselves saying, "No, it wasn't anything like that for me." Although the author does correct herself at times, often her own experience frames even the stories told by others and they are held up as typical. I suspect that hers *was* probably more typical than that of the group of Dutch immigrant kids I grew up with. Ours was much more carefree, liberating and joyful, and we were far, far less conscious of ourselves as oddballs, non-Canadians.

In my neck of the woods, most of the kids we grew up with and went to school with were from ethnic groups that had traditions that were even stranger to "Canadian society", whatever that referred to. Even those from the British Isles weren't seen as a Canadian standard in the polyglot community that was our environment, for they had English, Irish or Scotch accents. And they weren't very good scrappers. Everybody's parents seemed to speak with thick accents – if they spoke English at all.

The Dutch in and around Edmonton assimilated more quickly than any other group, including the English. In fact, some of them assimilated so fast that a couple of years after their arrival they were calling those who had called them deepees a few years earlier the same term, for they felt themselves to be more Canadian than, say, the Ukranians who had been there for decades. Some became Canadianized so fast that they forgot their Dutch before they had even learned to speak de Angleesh reel goot. Hutten describes parents who resisted the influx of English into home and church. The Dutch kids I grew up with were encouraged to speak English at home so their parents would learn it more quickly. Attitudes on many of such things probably varied considerably, depending on what province parents hailed from in the Netherlands and whether they were farmers or city-bound.

When I began reading the book, at first I was a bit irked by Hutten's penchant for generalizing, but then I realized this was only because I had always thought of my own experience as "typical", and it was considerably more positive than the perspective provided by Hutten, which treats it a bit like the trauma suffered by war vets. Although it does nod in that direction on occasion, the book does not often see it as a deeply enriching experience, nor does it celebrate the advantages of belonging to two cultures. There's a bit too much of a psychologizing, almost pathologizing, framework imposed on the experience than I like, but that's precisely the theme of the book. It is, indeed, one of the book's strengths, for those who were deeply hurt by the transition and who still carry those hurts with them will be helped to air those feelings.

Hutten has done a good job of organizing what is, after all, a complex experience; the book does much more than relate anecdotes about the journey, the arrival, first impressions and early hardships, but these do make for fascinating reading.

Harry der Nederlanden

Continued on page 13...

Uprooted: the boat, the train, arrival, the house and school

... continued from page 12

The boat

When Richard Duifhuis and his family traveled on the *Tabinta* in June of 1949, they were "stacked in the holds like sardines in a can, sleeping four high, with narrow pathways in between, women and children in one part, the men and older boys in another part."

Mary De Jong also came across on the *Tabinta,* in June of 1948.

"Conditions were terrible," she says. "Women and children on one side of the ship, the men on the other side, with just a curtain for privacy. Many people were seasick; the stench was terrible."

The *Volendam* on which we traveled had bunks that were three high, which was quite enough for the many children clambering into them every evening. My sister Ali has vivid memories of that big hold with its hundreds of women and children, all of them fighting a growing queasiness.

"Because I was already eleven, I was assigned a top bunk," says Ali. "That was really pretty good because at least up there nobody puked on me. Which was not always the case with the ones sleeping in the lower bunks."

I was the next oldest girl and also rated a top bunk. Families were all mixed together in this hold, and the boy who slept in the bunk directly below me was a total stranger. One night when I was already asleep he put his feet up and easily lifted my forty-two pound weight to roll me out of the canvas sling that passed for a mattress. I awoke on the hard floor, crying, and was comforted by another stranger, a woman who gave me *Haagse Hopjes.* It was my first taste of that particular candy.(p.54)

On the Groote Beer, conditions were especially crowded. Henk Wittenberg, who had earlier traveled to Indonesia on this ship, says the passageway between rows of bunks was so narrow that soldiers climbed to the upper bunks with one foot on each side of the aisle.

Those who were teenagers aboard ship generally enjoyed the voyage. Free from duties of school or work, they drank beer, played cards, or visited with other passengers. Herman van den Hoogen recalls rough seas that confined all the family except his father to their bunks by the second day of their trip. Seasickness bags stashed all over the boat found heavy use before being tossed overboard. Crackers were available at all hours, on the theory they'd help prevent vomiting. John Nauta says he and his shipboard friends roamed around at all hours, exploring the boat and trying to get cheap cigarettes.

Photos of the Groote Beer show a railing that consisted of six tubular steel bars, perhaps at seven or eight inch intervals. Any child could climb such a railing and plunge into the Atlantic, although I've never heard of such a thing happening. Very young children might have been able to squeeze through the bars, which may explain photos of the occasional child restrained by a harness.(p.56)

The train

Almost without exception, immigrants speak of the fumes, the smoke, dust and the dirt of train travel as they made their way from either Halifax or Montreal harbor to their final destination. John Kuropatwa's family took three days to come from Halifax to Ontario on "the slowest train! a terrible trip," only to find accommodations so poor that his mother regretted having made the move from her comfortable home in Holland. The trains carrying immigrants westward generally did supply food, but it was priced out of the reach of families with very little cash in their pocket.

The van Arkels were on a train that had no dining car, but Janny, thirteen at time, recalls her mother pulling out a teapot, cups, bread and jam. Hot water was available at one end of the car and a number of other immigrants were happy to share the van Arkel's tea, a good drink on this February day. "At a small town somewhere along our route we stopped and people are allowed some time to go and buy food," writes Janny in memoirs written many years later. "Father sets off to look for a store. He seems to be gone a long time and when the train blows its whistle and he is not back yet, I nearly panic. However, he arrives back on time with bread, butter, corned beef, oranges and other items, which is not bad for someone who only speaks a very few words of broken English."(p.59)

Richard Duifhuis's family was also running out of food by the time they reached northern Ontario on the sooty train that had brought them from the Tabinta's arrival in Quebec City. Sandwiches sold by the conductor were too expensive, and when an immigration agent aboard the train told them it would stop for twenty minutes in Kenora, Richard got off with a younger sister and both his parents. They kept a close eye on their watch, but buying groceries in broken English took time.

"Just as we were coming back into view of the train it pulled out, having stopped only ten minutes instead of twenty," relates Richard. "My older brother and sister and my younger brother were on the train. The rest of us stood dumbfounded by the train station, looking after our disappearing train."

The oldest child was seventeen, and may have kept his cool during the time it took for the parents to find a taxi with the help of the station master and race to the train's next stop. But it's not difficult to imagine the terror that must have gripped each member of that family, separated in the northern wilds of Ontario with little means of communication and no knowledge of the local scene.(p.60)

The house

The de Vries family that settled in Peterborough in 1951 thought their first house had plenty of space. Besides three bedrooms that were used, two others above the kitchen were unheated. One was used as storage.

"In the other bedroom Dad had heat lamps and fifty baby chickens," records Helen, who was seven at the time. "Probably an attempt to get a little extra cash, or else a jump on the season. They were moved outside when the weather was warmer."

Richard Duifhuis' family was smaller, with only five children. Their first dwelling in Canada hardly qualified as a house, and even with seven people it took some imagination to find place for beds. The structure consisted of a two-room shack attached to a cooking shack, with plywood walls painted in a variety of colors. A Coleman lantern illuminated the evening hours.

"One room served as my parents' bedroom," notes Richard, "the other as our dining-livingroom and my older brother had his sleeping cot in there too, during the coldest part of the winter. It had a coal heater. The cooking shack had a wood and coal cookstove. One end was curtained off, where my dad stacked two of our double beds. My sisters slept in the bottom, my younger brother and I in the top."

During summer the two older boys moved into another shack with no heat, but ran into a night when the thermometer sank to -20°F. Overall, Richard says, it was better than what some immigrants had.

Bert Schalij says their house was so cold "our breath froze to the ceiling;when it got mild the ice would melt so that everything got wet."

Harmke Holman, the oldest in a family of eventually twelve children, also recalls the cold. Her family arrived in 1949, when she was eight. Their house was extremely cold, with a dirt floor in part of it and just one large bedroom up in the attic.

The Strikwerda family that arrived in 1947 with seven children and a pregnant mother moved into a two bedroom house. "Three children slept in one bed, three boys in the other bed, Dad and Mom on a pull-out couch and my oldest brother slept on the couch's three pillows," relates Jean, the oldest daughter. (p.81)

The school

"I remember being totally bewildered," says Geertje, who now lives in San Jose, California. The teacher gave her a blue *Dick and Jane* book to read, and changed her name to Gertie because, to the teacher, "Geertje" was unpronouncable.

"I've always disliked that name," says Geertje, "possibly because of the grief and stress with which it's associated in my memory."

In Holland, Geertje had lived in a small town where she and a cousin would travel around quite freely even while pre-schoolers. She describes herself as "a fairly sturdy and independent child" at the time.

'All that changed'

"All that changed when we immigrated," she observes. "We lived far out in the country, no children with whom I could communicate in the area, no cousins or grandparents to visit, and unhappy, unnerving school experience because of the language and unknown expectations. Much more than I realized it at the time, that was a time of loss, shock, and grief to our entire family, which played itself out in different ways for each one of us. I expect that one of the reasons we were very close as siblings, even though we fought a lot, is that we were so dependent on each other for social interaction."

Many children found it difficult to go to school without anyone to bring them or introduce them. Anne Heerema and her three school age siblings headed for their third new school one Monday morning, this time in Calgary. At one point they stood on a hill overlooking the school when Anne was seized by such fear that she was unable to continue. She told the others, "I'm going home!" and did. All four appeared back home where their mother was busy with a huge pile of laundry. She must have understood their emotional desolation, because the kids were treated to hot chocolate before being escorted back to school that afternoon by an older brother who spoke English well. Anne was lucky, having seven older siblings. (p.91)

Yoga

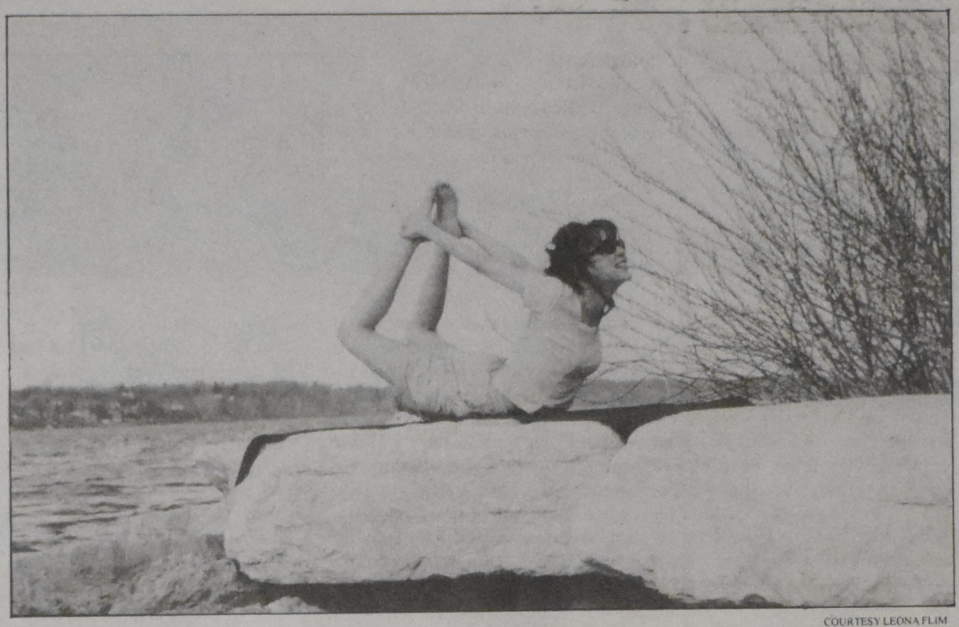
Breathe deep and stretch: you're in God's image

Leona Flim

I know it well — the soul-depleting urge to keep doing and getting, always faster and more. The tyranny of the urgent marks our busy and complex world but we Calvinists are especially affected. Our sense of duty and addiction to striving create an endless round of demands relating to career, family, house, yard, car, church and so on. We tend to be so preoccupied with doing and getting that we don't relish simply being — being alive.

Imagine my relief, then, to find an antidote — one that doesn't take us out of the world but creates enclaves of rest and healing within it. The antidote I mean, although novel and perhaps suspect in this corner of the Kingdom, is yoga.

Yoga is an ancient discipline that uses physical postures and breathing exercises to promote health through flexibility and relaxation. I started yoga to keep fit and have found it to be a way of staying close to God as well. Romans 12:1 urges us to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is (our) spiritual worship." Yoga helps me do that.



COURTESY LEONA FLIM

Leona Flim practices yoga. "Yoga, in giving us physical pleasure, allows us to experience the wonder of being body-persons. This wonder deepens our Christian understanding of what it means to be created in God's image."

A popularity boom

Yoga is enjoying a popularity boom in North America, according to a recent cover story in *Time* magazine. Yet North American Christians, in large part, have yet to explore it. Lack of time isn't the only reason. Nor are somewhat embarrassed claims of being just too stiff and creaky, too out of shape.

Probably the main reason Christians have held back is un-familiarity, combined in some cases with a certain wariness about yoga. I see this wariness as stemming not from Christian teaching per se, but rather from a particular "moral posture" some Christians have chosen to adopt as part of their world-and-life view.

The original philosophy of yoga, which originated in India some 5,000 years ago, has much in common with the Judeo-Christian tradition in that it promotes such values as wisdom, purity and contentment. Yet in some ways the teaching is fundamentally different from Christianity. While the ultimate aim of yoga is said to be "samadhi," the union of individual consciousness with the "overself" or God, the essence of Christianity is the sufficiency of Christ''s redemptive work.

Samadhi, a state of being said to involve complete illumination and fulfillment, is expected to occur when the male god Vishnu joins with the personification of the goddess of nature, Kundalini. Vishnu is believed to reside in the uppermost curvature of the skull; Kundalini in the lowest vertebra of the spine. The yoga positions and breathing exercises are intended to draw Kundalini up the spine to join with Vishnu, leading to enlightenment. Of course, this can only happen after many years of concentrated practice.

Teaching is clearly pagan

From a Christian point of view, this teaching is clearly pagan. Yet to dismiss the branch of yoga that teaches physical postures and breathing exercises on this basis alone, as some Christians do, strikes me as extreme. The ancient beliefs are not taught or even mentioned in a typical yoga class. Besides, how could stretching and breathing be wrong? Don't they celebrate and condition the body God made? If I take part in a yoga class with thankfulness to God, am I not bringing honor to Him?

The apostle Paul raises that very question in 1 Corinthians 10:30 in relation to meat offered to idols. His conclusion in verse 31 is this: "Whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Romans 12:1, as noted earlier, considers the offering of our bodies our spiritual worship. The renowned yoga teacher B. K. S. Iyengar comes to the yoga mat in just this way. The mat is for him an altar on which he brings himself before God in humility and full humanity — with measured breathing, focused awareness and a remarkably supple body.

Most of us will never bend and stretch like a seasoned yoga teacher can. But that doesn't mean we have to miss out on the benefits of yoga, not the least of which is the pleasure that comes with a deeply relaxed body. The sense of profound well-being that marks the end of a yoga session is exactly what entices many of us to continue. It results from the massage of internal organs through bending and stretching, and from the supply of fresh oxygen to the entire body through abdominal breathing.

Yoga, in giving us physical pleasure, allows us to experience the wonder of being body-persons. This wonder deepens our Christian understanding of what it means to be created in God's image. Too often we live mainly above the neck, treating faith as a set of intellectual beliefs and the body only as a tool to help us accomplish things for job or church. We tend to spiritualize our faith, forgetting that we humans are an inextricable unity of soul *and* body. Isn't that what the Heidelberg catechism means when it says we belong body and soul, to Jesus Christ?

When we receive a special gift from someone, we pore over the details. The more aware we are of each nuance — each function of a new gadget or each photograph of a beautiful new book — the more grateful we are to the giver. The same is true with our bodies. The more aware we are of the body and the amazing synergy of how it works, the more we want to celebrate it. Yoga is a vehicle for this. It heightens body awareness while also teaching us not to become impatient or frustrated with our limits and flaws. Breath that goes in and out, blood that surges, legs that hold us up, a back that bends forward and backward, arms that stretch and reach — all of these are gifts that can evoke floods of gratitude to God for the physical pleasure of being alive.

Yoga alleviates health problems

I'm still a beginner at yoga. But the postures I found to be strange contortions at first are now familiar and energizing. Yoga helps me feel good — a bit of a stretch for the Calvinist in me, but even that is changing. I'm stronger and more flexible because of yoga, and less anxious. Yoga is also helping me deal with depression, one of many health problems yoga can help alleviate (it also counteracts joint stiffness and other conditions we associate with aging).

Lying back on the yoga mat at the end of a session, I feel the last traces of stress and worry drain from me. The breathing and postures bring me to a place of peace that reminds me of the green pasture the psalmist David mentions. For this moment I am mercifully free of wants, including the desires to excel and impress people. Words and thoughts recede; breathing remains. I am a tranquil lake, calm and serene, open to God.

Sometimes yoga brings buried pain to the surface, allowing healing tears to flow. Other times the tears well up from happiness, when I sense in my body that God treasures me despite myself. Then, when the father-love of God is exquisitely tangible, I want to love and bless others in turn. Some days I want to take the whole Earth in my arms.

Yoga gives new meaning to Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God."

Leona Flim, a St. Catharines writer, is engaged in ongoing research on Christianity and yoga. For more information, or to give feedback on this article, contact her by e-mail at leonaflim@hotmail.com. She would especially like to hear from people who have reflected on this topic and who might consent to be interviewed.

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After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides

The Great Wall

It seems the only place you can go to avoid politics is Disneyland. Don't go to the Olympics. They're often corrupt, doped, or disorganized. Despite all the best intentions, they're a broken event with some profound problems. We recognize this, but they're still worth it. They're exhilarating, actually.

It's old news now, but Toronto didn't get the 2008 Olympics and that's a lousy deal. Toronto is an impressive city with the civic spirit and infrastructure to handle the Games. What I find particularly disappointing is the political justification that some people give for handing the Games to Beijing. When critics have charged that the IOC has rewarded one of earth's most repressive regimes, the defense is that they are trying to promote world peace. That far overestimates the power of the Games.

One big, beautiful track meet

The truth is that the Olympics is just one big, beautiful track meet. It did nothing for the people of Germany in 1936, or for the impoverished Mexicans of 1968. It didn't exactly do wonders for peace in Sarajevo in 1984. Does it make sense then that the Games will have some effect on human rights on China? Will the Chinese leaders care so deeply about being liked that they'll change their human rights policies if we come to play with them? Hardly.

China has one-fifth of the world's population and is one giant cash register. That fact is what has kept the Western World from taking responsibility for putting extreme pressure on China to treat its citizens with dignity and respect. It's unfortunate but inevitable that the Olympics are becoming an effective Hollywood-style script. You can imagine the TV executives in New York formulating their stories for 2008. Will the Sleeping Giant of Asia awaken? Can the sweet young gymnast from Missouri stand up to the evil communists? Can the all-American boy from Oklahoma beat the army-bred Chinese swimmer to the wall? Throughout our modern times, the best Games have had some underlying tension to enhance the drama. What is remembered most about the 1936 Olympics in Berlin? It was a duel between Adolf Hitler and Jesse Owens — and Owens won four gold medals. It didn't save anybody from the Holocaust, though.

Abuses are more liable to be exposed

But there is good that the Olympics can bring to Beijing. It will give us a reason to talk about China and to give it a closer examination over the next eight years. As Bob Costas, the Olympic anchor for NBC, says, "The light will be on them. One of the big differences between 1936 and now is that you had virtually no media. Now we have an international media that will be even more improved by 2008 in how quickly it can beam images. Their abuses are more liable to be exposed."

Discussion about China in the next eight years and beyond will illuminate different points of view and hopefully lead to some solutions on what to do about the abuse of Chinese citizens. The Games themselves, though, won't do much. It's what we do with the knowledge that will make a difference.

It's an amazing thing that God uses broken people and broken things (like the Olympics) as avenues for renewal. No matter how desperately depraved we allow inventions like the media and sports to become, he provides ways for us to use them to give healing to our world. Let's hope that our observation of the games will lead to some keys for seeking righteousness in China. Changing the hearts of the Chinese leaders in one summer is probably not realistic, but coming up with new ideas on how to pressure them to change is.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

Cure for 'hurry sickness' is rest in God, he says

Polly House

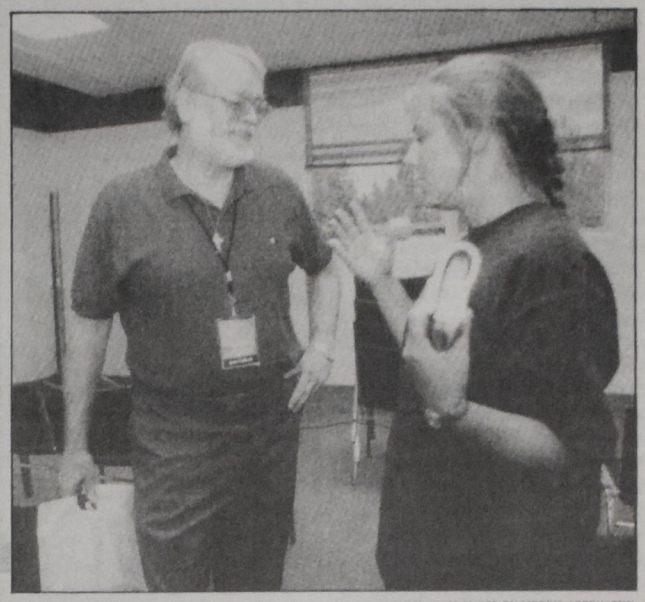
GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — John Tadlock says there is an epidemic of "hurry sickness" in today's run-as-fast-as-you-can world.

"Everyone is busy. Everyone uses the words, 'There aren't enough hours in a day.'" But, he said, days have the same number of hours they always have. Tadlock, collegiate ministries group leader with the Baptist General Association of Virginia, spoke to a group during Collegiate Week at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center.

Hurry sickness, he said, is "the continuous struggle to participate in more and more events in less and less time, frequently in the face of opposition of other people.

"We have faxes, e-mails, voice mail, pay at the pump and microwaves — all this stuff designed to take less time so we will have more time. But, you know, it doesn't work that way,'" he said.

Thirty-four years ago some members of Congress predicted that by the turn of the century one of the main problems in the United States would be what people would do with all their spare time, he noted. With all the "new" time-saving devices, the U.S. work week would be cut to about 30 hours, they had predicted.



BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO BY MORRIS ABERNATHY

John Tadlock and Robin Day, a student at University of Utah, visit after Tadlock, collegiate ministries group leader for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, discussed today's fast-paced life during Collegiate Week at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center.

Who has spare time?

"Now, tell me, how many of you have all that spare time?" he asked. "You may have hurry sickness if you are constantly speeding up the pace of your daily activities.

"If you are approaching a stop light and you judge which lane to get in based on the make and model of the cars already there, you probably have hurry sickness. If you choose a lane at Wal-Mart based not only on the number of people in the lane, but by doing a mental tabulation of the number of items they have in their carts, you probably have hurry sickness," Tadlock said.

"But you know you have a bad case if you even keep track of the people in the other lanes and you calculate if they are moving more quickly than you are and you are upset if they get through their lane before you do."

He said a second symptom of hurry sickness is becoming "polyphasic," when a person always is trying to do more than one thing at a time.

"You're never satisfied with how much you are accomplishing, are you?" he asked. "You're always doing at least two things simultaneously — talking on the phone and typing on the computer, reading a book and watching television.

Sound familiar?

Oh, and driving your car ... what all do we do while we are driving? Put on make-up, talk on a cell phone, shave, comb our hair, eat breakfast, change CDs in the player. Does this sound familiar?

"And the classic — think about it. Do you have magazines or books in your bathroom?" he asked the group.

Tadlock said there is a spiritual danger when people become polyphasic in their prayer life. "How many of you have your prayer time when you are driving the car or when you are in the shower?"

He cited studies showing, contrary to popular opinion, that increases in stimulation of the brain do not cause it to function better. "The brain actually starts to shut down when you do several things at once. We aren't functioning better as we get busier."

A third symptom of hurry sickness, he said, is clutter. "Our lives have too much clutter. We lack simplicity. Our culture doesn't let us simplify well. We have too many dates on our calendar. We have too much stuff!"

Posing the question, "How does the hurry sickness affect you?" Tadlock responded by saying it causes people to become superficial and destroys a Christian's intimacy with God.

"When we are intimate with God, the rest of our life will be in order; we operate more effectively," he said. "Hurry crowds out significant relationships. It crowds out prayer. We use words to keep us from listening to God. To listen, you have to be still and quiet. The importance of listening to God cannot be overstated."

Busyness also erodes a person's capacity to love.

"We lose the capacity to love God and others," Tadlock said. "Hurry and love are fundamentally opposed."

He said a danger of constant activity is getting addicted to hurry. "We live in such a state of adrenaline arousal that we can't slow down."

So, what can be done?

"We have to ruthlessly delete hurry from our lives," Tadlock said. "The opposite of hurry isn't slow. The opposite of hurry is rest. God wants us to understand the importance of rest, of sleep."

He quoted what he said is often heard in religious circles: "'I'd rather burn out than rust out.' Well, people, either way, you're out!

"Maybe the most spiritual thing you can do tonight is to get a good night's sleep," Tadlock counseled. "You can't be loving to anyone if you're tired. Sleep is a spiritual act that may bring you closer to God. You can't pursue life and God without it."

Website offers resources to abuse survivors and their counsellors

Alan Doerksen

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Abuse is a problem which leaves some victims feeling they have no place to turn for help. But the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing such a place in the form of a new website.

In May, MCC British Columbia set up the website, which MCC states is meant for survivors of domestic violence, child sexual abuse, rape, or elder abuse; and for pastors or support people dealing with abuse victims. The website also states that it is meant to help "congregational leaders seeking resources for people in their communities of faith who need to know more to support survivors and perpetrators in situations of domestic violence or sexual abuse." The website is a project of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse program, developed by the MCC B.C. Womens's Concerns Committee, reports MCC B.C. The Internet address is: **www.mccbc.com/abuse**.

This website offers useful resources such as a list of books, resource kits and programs for churches, on abuse-related topics. It also lists phone numbers for abused children and adults to call to get emergency help or medical treatment, or to talk over their problems.

Definitions and examples of domestic violence and other forms of abuse are given by the website, to help abuse survivors understand their situation better.

How to respond to abusers

MCC B.C.'s website offers suggestions on how to respond to abusers, such as these:

- Be very clear that the violent behavior is not acceptable and must stop. This is the first priority.
- Do not accept rationalizations or blame of the victim.
- Do not take his word that the violence has stopped. Rather, check with the abused partner. Often it may be necessary for a couple to separate until the violence has stopped.
- Hold the abuser accountable. Promises to change are part of the cycle of violence. Unless they are accompanied by concrete actions such as going to a treatment group, they are meaningless. In order to change he must accept responsibility for the violence. Then, if he is serious about changing, he will seek out the help he needs to do it.
- Offer him hope that he can change. Group treatment designed especially for men who batter seems to be the most effective.

Responding to the abused

Throughout the website, feminine pronouns are used for victims, since women are eight times more likely to be victimized by a spouse than are men, according to MCC B.C. The site states, "When men are abused, the effects and pastoral responses are the same. We are concerned for abuse of all whether male or female, adult or children." The website also offers suggestions on how to respond to the abused, such as these:

- Assess the danger. If she is phoning, ask if she is at home now. Is her partner there? Can he hear? Are the children there? Are there weapons in the house? Does he have one? Be sure that a safe place is available for her, whether in a home or a women's shelter; let her know how to contact such a place in your community.
- Does she need medical treatment? Does she need help getting to the hospital?
- Listen. Give her time. Don't rush her. She has been controlled and manipulated in many ways. Allow her to be in charge of this time.
- Beware of blaming the victim. The abuse is not her fault.
- Recognize that abuse escalates. If she stays in the situation and her husband does not acknowledge his abusiveness and actively seek help, the abuse will happen again and it will get worse; so discuss her options with her.
- Avoid giving advice.
- Help her make a safety plan. Respect her strength. Assist her in her planning, but don't take charge.

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Towards gender inclusive language

Building Trust
Vicky Van Andel

Our national anthem is beautiful and I have always sung it with much enthusiasm and respect. Recently, however, I became aware, by way of the newspapers, that a sentence in the song is gender exclusive. It uses the word "sons" to mean "all people". The anthem hasn't been the same to me since then. I get stuck on "sons" every time I get to it and want to sing a more gender inclusive word instead.

The debate about the word "sons" may appear to be just another bothersome politically correct and irritating discussion by people who need something to argue about. After all, the anthem was written and accepted a long time ago and has served us well over the years. Besides, we all know that the word "sons" is meant to include all Canadian citizens.

No specific reference to women

But the reality is that "sons" refers to men, and not to women. We know, of course, that all sons are born of women, but the language used here excludes any specific reference to women.

Unimportant though it may seem, this is an example of gender exclusive language. Gender exclusive language is common. When we look closely at history and also at our upbringing, we see that gender exclusive language has been around for a long time. So long in fact, that we are shaped by it and don't even notice it. We take it for granted until we become aware of it, have a light bulb moment so to speak. Then we are no longer able to not see it.

Gender exclusive language is one of the realms that we have to address when we work at gender equality in society and in the church. The words we use when we speak to each other are important. They are the vehicle by which we communicate. Our choice of words connect us to each other or distance us from each other.

How gender affects communication

There are three parts to the process of communication between people; the intent of the person who does the speaking, the actual message that is sent, and the way the receiver interprets the message. Both the sender and receiver of a message reflect their assumptions in the exchange of information. When we speak using language that is gender exclusive, meaning that we address one gender only and not the other, we are thinking primarily of that gender only. If we say that we really mean the other gender as well, then we are basically rendering that gender a status of invisibility. The conclusion that is subconsciously drawn by both genders is that the unaddressed gender is not worth mentioning or does not need to be spoken to directly. That gender is less important.

Our language isn't gender equal

The language we have been exposed to over the centuries and in our own lives has not been gender equal. Historically language has always been more male than female oriented. Men have been the more active communicators while women have been the more passive receivers. Stories about the accomplishments of men in history are many, while stories about women are hard to find. Studies also show that there are more positive words in our language to describe men, and more negative words to describe women. Clearly how language is used has a great impact on the relationships between the genders.

Becoming aware of the way we use language is one of the challenges we face as we work on gender reconciliation. We need to recognize exclusive language when it happens and change it. More and more this is being done. But it is very hard work to change the trends of the past. It feels much like swimming upstream against a strong current. To make headway we need a lot of strength and perseverance because the current keeps pushing us in the opposite direction.

Women are now taking on active roles in all areas of life and they are telling their stories the way they see them and experience them. Women have always worked hard, but they have not always had the opportunity and freedom to express their personal and feminine experience of life. Much of it has been interpreted in terms of societal norms and expectations.

Therefore, we need to take a new look at our national anthem. We need to revise it to include words that speak to both genders. It needs to show clearly that it talks about all the citizens of this country. Such a revision is also a positive thing, and not a bothersome problem. It is good to move ahead and change what is wrong. It is another step towards gender reconciliation.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column, and invites anyone who would like to contribute to the column to contact her via fax at: 1-780-473-0970, or via e-mail at: vanandelv@oanet.com.

Hide your cat; the bullfrogs are coming

LANGLEY, B.C. — Naturalists in B.C. warn that giant bullfrogs from the U.S. are crossing the border and taking on Canadian citizenship. Like many a U.S. corporation, however, they are swallowing up the competition. Some native species of frogs may soon become extinct, for the big fellows have huge appetites.

There are reports that some bullfrogs, not content with puny Canadian frogs, are going after ducklings and cats. No doubt these big boys are from Texas, and to many Canadians they are an augury of things to come. A spokesman for a radical student group speculated darkly that globalization has begun to infect even non-human species down south.

Several housewives in Langley wondered why their husbands were volunteering to take their pet chihuahuas for a walk around the pond. They are now being treated by trauma teams from Florida, where many chihuahuas — and marriages — have been lost to gators.

CSIS – Canadian Intelligence – has commissioned a study which explores ways to use the giant bullfrogs to provide security during the G-8 meetings to be held in B.C. next year. They'll certainly look scarier than Canadian Mounties, who have been ordered to smile at demonstrators at all times, spray them with Labatt's and say, "Welcome to Canada, eh?"

Book Review/Justice

A badly needed study of biblical teaching on justice and punishment

Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment

by Christopher D. Marshall,
Wm. B. Eerdmans, USA & Lime Grove House, NZ
333 pages, June 2001, $24.00, 1-800-253-7521

Reviewed by Rev. John de Vries, Jr.

Since 1970, restorative justice initiatives have been springing up locally and globally. These grassroots initiatives by the Maori Christians in New Zealand, by Mennonite Christians in Ontario and Indiana, and by Western Canada First Nations natives had no theological or biblical underpinnings. Christopher D. Marshall, speaker, New Testament scholar and graduate professor of Tyndale Graduate School of Theology, Auckland, New Zealand, provides a badly needed study of New Testament teaching on justice and punishment. The author encourages the reader to rethink commonly held assumptions about the place of punishment in the New Testament and for society today.

Rooted in forgiveness

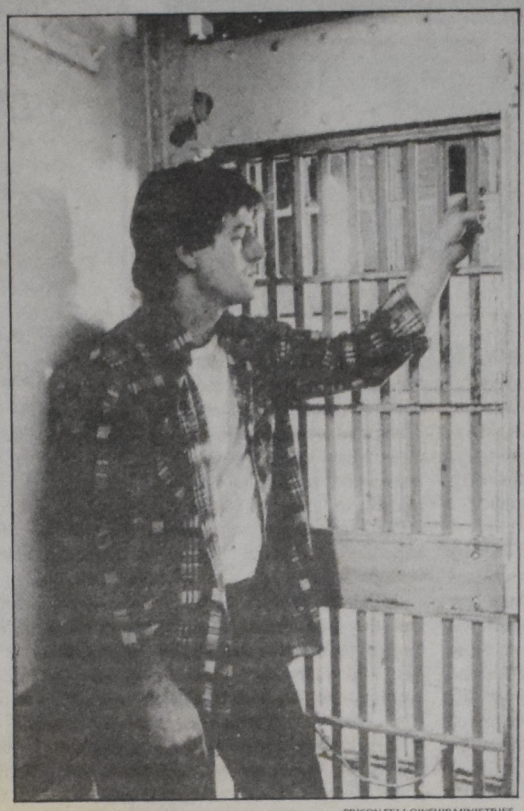
Prompted by Howard Zehr's pioneer restorative justice book, *Changing Lenses*, Marshall provides theological groundings and New Testament kingdom signs that affirm a larger than 'punishment' response to crime. The study encourages a shift 'beyond retribution' to prophetic restorative justice teachings. Beyond retribution, the author envisions a biblical teaching and process that is rooted in forgiveness. It focuses primarily on a larger picture of healing, reconciliation, reparation and the future.

With two million prisoners in U.S.A. alone, today's criminal justice system is not working. The alternative to retributive punishment calls for a conversion of heart, thought and practice. Marshall's analysis of justice literature and his exegesis of the New Testament presents a persuasive encouragement for rethinking long held assumptions. When Herman Bianchi, head of the Free University Law School, lectured in Canada, he stated that 'criminal justice issues' had not been addressed by the Protestant Reformation. The secular Roman jurisprudence had been adopted 'hook, line, and sinker'. This book can help begin a correction of this alleged 'omission'.

A God-pleasing response

Marshall's excellent discussion cannot be ignored by advocates of 'just desserts'. Presently, the Christian Reformed Church, denominationally and congregationally, is taking steps to find the biblical teaching for a more God-pleasing response to community brokenness and crime. Marshall's book will help focus the issues and will challenge common biblical assumptions.

Marshall is an excellent teacher and writer. He provides in detail the different justice perspectives, the tensions, the challenges and potential landmines along the way. God is a god of love whose justice is the operation of love responding to the sins of humankind. The analysis of justice in Paul and Jesus is scholarly. All nuances of interpretation are addressed. The chapter that highlights the theories of justice and punishment places the book solidly in today's context. When addressing human and divine punishment, the author finds the New Testament less prescriptive for future ages and more descriptive of justice as God's dealing with people in their historical situation. Marshall analyses in detail the pros and cons of capital punishment. The conservative Christians in North America ensured the survival of capital punishment. The author finds this incompatible with a gospel of redemption and reconciliation.



PRISON FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

This book challenges our 'punishment-inclined' community to explore outside the boundaries of traditional Reformational teachings.

Consummation of justice

Forgiveness is the 'consummation of justice'. Christ's transformation in the Christian calls for involvement in shaping restorative criminal justice. Marshall's development of the stages of the forgiveness process is creative and person empowering. Forgiveness that provides the grounding for justice is not left to remote abstractions. Forgiveness and restorative justice must involve the victim, offender and the affected community. It is Christ who empowers the Christian actively involved in the justice process. Nor is it to be left up to professional experts per se.

This book challenges our 'punishment-inclined' community to explore outside the boundaries of traditional Reformational teachings. Marshall states that the doctrine of penal substitutionary punishment of Christ as adopted from Anselm by the Reformers led to 'punitive sentencing'. Marshall sees Paul's understanding of Christ's substitutionary role not as one of replacement but as one of representation 'for our sins'. This calls Christians to look beyond punishment in the response to crime.

As traditionally understood by the Reformed community, God's justice has been abstract and less people engaging in the 'justice process'. Has it been the Reformed understanding of the atonement that, up to now, has left us outside restorative justice initiatives? Marshall's New Testament understanding and call to active engagement in restorative justice shall bear fruit that are anticipatory signs of the Kingdom.

What implications for society?

What are the implications of restorative justice for life in society? It is made clear that forgiveness cannot be legislated. However, when 'restorative justice' tools are used, i.e. circle sentencing, group conferencing, victim-offender-reconciliation etc., the victim is able to share his or her pain in the presence of the offender, the offender is able to speak to the victim (be accountable and responsible), and together with family and friend supports all are able to conference and develop an agreed-upon resolution. This solution will nurture reconciliation and reparation.

In the larger public domain, the author suggests that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa sets a good example of what a 'restorative justice' process can do. The TRC process only addressed the tip of the mountains of South African pain and brutality. However, the TRC's call to accountability began a restorative justice process because there is 'no future without forgiveness'. Forgiveness begins to be realized as people rise up from their prayers, their pain and their anger to be engaged in a face-to-face process of restoring justice that results in healing, reparation, restitution, rebuilding of broken community and signs of Shalom.

Prison Fellowship begun 25 years ago

This past August Prison Fellowship, the ministry founded by Charles Colson, celebrated its 25th anniversary. In 1974, the scandal of Watergate sent White House special counsel Chuck Colson to federal prison. A new Christian, he faced challenges and adversities that tested his faith and self-respect: the humiliation of being stripped of his status and power; the loneliness of being separated from his family; the fear of having his life threatened by other prisoners; the ongoing strain of being surrounded by so much hopelessness.

Keeping his ties to prison

Paroled in 1975, he could easily have opted to quickly close the book on that dark time and move on with his life as inconspicuously as possible.

But Chuck didn't choose that option. He knew that God wanted him to hold onto his ties to prison and continue to identify with his fellow prisoners. So in 1976, with little more than a vision and the support of a few friends, Chuck began Prison Fellowship Ministries (PFM) to proclaim to inmates the love and the power of Jesus Christ.

PFM initially focused on taking selected Christian prisoners out of prison for intensive training through Washington Discipleship Seminars held in the nation's capital. Those prisoners then returned to prison to evangelize and teach their "colleagues." But when one warden refused to co-operate, PFM was challenged to take the program inside the prison walls.

This brought home the importance of training local volunteers to go inside prisons and build relationships with inmates. Today PFM's ministry relies on a volunteer network of nearly 50,000.

PFM has long argued crime is fundamentally a moral and spiritual problem that requires a moral and spiritual solution. Offenders, for example, don't simply need rehabilitation or restraints; they require regeneration of a sinful heart. Crime victims long for more than just surviving after a trauma; they crave new life filled with hope and joy. And communities need more than an absence of criminal activity; they need the presence of shalom, a unifying peace and harmony that far surpasses anything the world has to offer.

For years, PFM has promoted and applied the principles of "restorative justice"— a way of responding to crime that truly restores broken lives, broken relationships, and broken communities.

That's why, from its inception, PFM has challenged and equipped the church to minister to prisoners and their families, offering the only message that can transform the sin-sick heart — the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(From Prison Fellowship Ministries' website: **www.pfm.org**)

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

NO WONDER TV NEWS IS in trouble. News increasingly is moving away from clamorous action to unglamorous long-term problems, such as slowly encroaching droughts and slowly rising temperatures, all none too telegenic.

Come to think of it: TV has come at a stage of history when color and pageantry and real war scenes no longer take place. Of course, films try to re-enact these periods, with fake sea battles and gladiators fighting lions, but the real thing would have been much more fascinating: Nelson at Trafalgar or Piet Hein taking the Silver Armada from Spain, or Wellington and Napoleon at Waterloo with thousands of soldiers in brightly colored uniforms fighting on foot or on horseback. Now warfare is waged somewhere high up in the sky with pilots pushing buttons, and all we see is the rubble on the ground. No more personal valor and heroic hand-to-hand combat.

THE SAME APPLIES TO biblical scenes. Take the Sea of Galilee and Jesus walking on the water: it would make for a splendid picture. Just imagine a reporter excitedly shouting in the microphone as Peter approaches, only to suddenly sink beneath the waves. Now the Sea of Galilee looks more like a mud bowl; the level is so low that people walk on parts of the lake bottom — and this in a lake whose size so impressed the ancient world that it earned the title of "sea".

Israel depends on this reservoir for much of its water. The miracle today would be for torrents of water to pour down from heaven. The pious Jews in the kibbutzes there daily send up prayers to heaven for rain, rain, rain, and a miracle as great as "walking on water" is needed to make this happen.

HISTORIANS TELL US that the Nineteenth Century belonged to Great Britain and the past 100 years to the U.S.A. It seems to me that the Twenty First Century will belong to Water and to the nation or region that controls most of it. This could make it the Canadian one, for we, with 0.4 per cent of the world's people, control perhaps as much as 20 per cent of the world fresh water supply.

There are substitutes for oil: solar energy, wind, hydrogen, hydro-electric, wood even, but if we run out of water, there is no other liquid to replace it. Milk needs water first. Anything that grows needs water. Without it we have deserts. We can live without food for weeks, but we need water within a few days.

WATER IS IN THE NEWS almost constantly now. Last week in Stockholm, 1,200 water experts met to assess the world's water needs. They did not paint an optimistic picture. The droughts in many parts of the world — and floods elsewhere — have concentrated the mind of writers and speakers. One professor in Regina said on CBC that, based on historical records, Western Canada may be in for a long term drought. He had checked back 2,000 years, and found that dry spells, lasting as long as 60 years, have taken place every 60 years or so, with the average being about a decade.

Another talk show was about Amman, in Jordan, where only the wealthy can afford to buy extra water delivered in a bucket. There, people are allowed tap water one day per week and showering is a luxury only King Abdullah can afford.

Nations have gone to war over oil, something we can't drink and in the long run need like an extra hole in the head. Only in the last century has oil been liquid gold. I remember from the war years in occupied Holland that, towards the end, a loaf of bread went for a golden wedding ring. Will the same happen with water? We can't eat or drink gold. We need water, and the battle over the very essence of life will be ferocious. Last year, American intelligence agencies told President Clinton, in a worldwide security forecast, that in 15 years there will be a water shortage so severe that if steps are not taken soon for conservation and co-operation, there will be regional wars over it.

The U.S. has four per cent of the world's population and eight per cent of the world's fresh water. Compare that to China, where almost a quarter of the world lives with less water than the U.S.A., a surprising amount of it polluted. Already, 300 large Chinese cities have serious water shortages.

FOR NOW THE IMMEDIATE problem is in the Middle East: not only Jordan but Israel, Syria, Iran, and especially the Gaza Strip with its high population density, are screaming for water. Even if the political tensions there were solved today — a very unlikely possibility — in less than a decade the area will explode over water unless regional and long-range planning starts soon. The current drought there and global warming makes this even more urgent.

Water shortages will also hit us in North America, not only because of the general warming trend, but also because of asphalted sprawl that seals off the soil so that rain cannot replenish the continent's vast underground reservoirs, as well as the growing demand of agriculture and increasing pollution.

***TIME* MAGAZINE** recently reported that in Texas people are mad at the Dutch. No wonder, they have always been an assertive bunch. Dairy farmers from the Lowlands have left their over-regulated country to settle wherever there are opportunities to milk cows without interference from the authorities. They've been buying farms in Texas as well as Canada. They establish Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOS) in which they milk as many as 2,000 cows a day. One county, not too far from the Bush Ranch in North-Central Texas, has 110,000 cows, producing, in addition to milk, 1.8 million tons of cow poop a year.

Texans do everything big. I am not sure whether they are proud to be State No.1 in animal-waste production, which works out to 18 kg of manure per Texan per day. The state, thanks to the influence of its former governor, is famous for not regulating much of anything, especially agriculture. However, while the maximum of fecal coliform is supposed to be 200 units per 100 milliliters of water, in some places it runs from 50,000 units to millions and even billions. So, even the little water left there is increasingly unfit for human consumption.

IN CANADA, THE drought is almost equally spread from coast to coast, with a few exceptions, one being the Far North, where more rain is falling, speeding up the melting of the permafrost, and so releasing methane gas, which adds to global warming. .

The *Ottawa Citizen* ran a seven-day series on the Water Crisis. Long two-page articles dealt with (1) The water crisis upon us; (2) The high price of water subsidies; (3) Flushing a fortune down the toilet; (4) Drought — waiting for "the big one;" (5) Alberta's free-market experience; (6) Canada's Water export debate; (7) The search for the Holy Grail.

The *New York Times* also gave a shorter, but similarly gloomy picture for the U.S.A. Its August 12 Sunday Issue covered the entire geographic U.S.A. with some suprising statements.

After describing how a piece of wetland near Lake Michigan has disappeared, despite its location near a large water body and a wet spring, the article says: "Parts of six counties in a region that borders one of the world's largest freshwater sources, Lake Michigan, could be in for serious water shortages within 20 years, the report by a regional planning commission said."

Just picking some sections will give an idea of the extent of the problem.

"Not only are there drought problems in the arid West, but also Florida reservoirs below and above ground are badly depleted and becoming briny with saltwater seepage. The water shortage is so bad in parts of the state, despite a recent tropical storm, that people have been hauled into court and fined for violating strict water rationing standards.... In Kentucky, more than half of the state's 120 counties ran short of water or were near shortages this year before heavy rains brought relief.... Even in the suburbs around Seattle, on the wet side of the Cascade Mountains, demand for water is outstripping supply, raising the prospect of shortages within 20 years.

"Some major American cities in the Southwest, including El Paso, San Antonia and Albuquerque, could go dry in 10-20 years.... In Northeast Kansas the water shortage is so severe that state officials are discussing plans to build a pipeline, costing as much as $200 million, to the Missouri River to keep the area from going dry. But most of the water in the Missouri is already spoken for, other users say, setting the kind of conflict that is endemic in the West.

"FARMS USE THE majority of American water. At the time when most farms are subsidized by the government — failing to make money in a global market — many water experts say it is inevitable that water to meet future needs will have to come from agriculture. The same amount of water it takes to support just 10 farm jobs can support 100,000 high-tech jobs, said Peter Gleich, a water expert with the non-profit Pacific Institute in Oakland, California."

Let me end on that interesting note. Currently 40 per cent of our food comes from irrigation. It takes 1,000 tons of water to produce a single ton of wheat. Question: what is more important: that we have bread to eat — even though agriculture needs little labor — or that we produce basically non-essential trinkets so that thousands of people have a job to go to, but may not have food? The choice of where to allocate water will become increasingly crucial.

Bert Hielema'a website has been updated again: www.geocities.com/hielemab

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Birth

HANEMAAYER:
With gratitude to God the giver of life, we announce the early arrival of our twin daughters
Emily Joanne, 4 lbs, 9 1/2 oz.
and
Jessica Erin, 4 lbs, 10 oz.
on July 27, 2001.
Happy parents are David & Kim Hanemaayer. Little sisters for Teresa, Brandon and Samantha.
Grandchildren for Bert & Agnes Hanemaayer and Stuart & Catherine Oosterhuis.
Address: 230 Hanemaayer Lane, RR 1, Kettleby, ON L0G 1J0

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Birth

VEENSTRA:
We, Gary and Laura Veenstra, wish to announce the birth of our daughter
Stephanie Jean Veenstra
born April 27, 2001 at Georgetown Hospital.
We give praise and thanks to God for His gift of Stephanie, a sister for two year old Michael. Rejoicing with us are great-grandmother Beppe Slager, Woodstock Ont., grandparents Michael and Jean Veenstra, Woodstock Ont., and Melvin and Maryanne Elzinga, Smithville Ont.
Uncles, aunts and cousins:
Kevin Veenstra, Waterloo, Ont., Phil & Val VanderVeen and family, St. Anns, Ont., Kevin & Kyung-Hye Elzinga and family, Beamsville, Ont., Angela Elzinga, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Home address: 65 Weber Dr., Georgetown, ON L7G 1C5

Anniversaries

Hamilton Beamsville
1951 September 8 2001
"Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him, and He will act." (Psalm 37:4,5)
With gratitude to God, we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
ARIE and CARLA KOORNNEEF
(nee VAN WELY)
We rejoice that they have been blessed with many years of health and happiness together. It is our prayer that they will continue to enjoy the gift of marriage and we give praise to God for the manifold ways in which they have experienced God's riches.
Alice Klamer (Don †2000) — Beamsville
Scott, Clinton, Lance, Lee
Adrian & Kathy Koornneef — Grimsby
Bryan, Bradley, Dylan
Henry & Joanne Koornneef — Beamsville
Diana & Derrick Bulk (fiancé), Karen, Michael
Fred & Evelyn Koornneef — Grimsby
Marcus, Zachary, Jessica
Caroline & Ron Eyk — Beamsville
Heather & Mark
We invite family and friends to an Open House on Saturday, September 8, 2001, from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church, 290 Main St. East, Grimsby.
Home address: 4292 Lincoln Ave. S, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

1951 September 25 2001
We hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of
SIPKE (SID) and MINNIE DENEKAMP (nee BARELDS)
We love you and wish you God's continued blessings.
Congratulations, Mom and Dad!
Thea & John
Jannie & Leo
Rina & Len
Herman
your grandchildren and great-grandchild.
We invite you to celebrate with us at an Open House on September 29, 2001, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, 606 Dundas St. E (Hwy 5) Waterdown, Ont.
Best wishes only.
Home address: 651 Inverness Ave., Burlington, ON L7T 3S9

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Arie and Marie Edelman on their 60th anniversary.

1941 2001
60th Anniversary
ARIE and MARIE EDELMAN
"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways." (Psalm 128:1)
Arie Edelman and Marie Kruijt were married on September 23, 1941, in Bodegraven, the Netherlands. On September 23, 2001, they will have been walking together for 60 years.
Love and congratulations from your eight children and their families. Thank you for your love and support and for always being there for us, Mom and Dad.
We pray that God will continue to bless you.
Friends and family are invited to help us celebrate at an Open House at the First Christian Reformed Church, 20525 72 Ave, Langley, B.C., on Sunday, September 30, after the 9:00 a.m. service until 1:00 p.m.
Home address: 20128 42A Ave., Langley, BC V3A 3B4

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ANDREW and JANNIE MIEDEMA
(nee BAKKER)
"De Here is mijn Herder, mij zal niets ontbreken." (Psalm 23:1)
Indeed, the Lord has led them as their Good Shepherd for 50 years.
We, their children, praise and thank God for His faithfulness and goodness!
We love you, Dad and Mom, Pake and Grandma:
Tettie & Ron Rooke — London, Ont.
Michael & Diana Miedema — St. Thomas, Ont.
Matt, Danielle and Patrick
Bernie & Marsha Miedema — Exeter, Ont.
Meaghan, Tyler and Nikki
To mark this special wedding anniversary, there will be an Open House on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2001, D.V. from 2 - 4 p.m., held at the Exeter Christian Reformed Church, 330 Huron St. W, Exeter, Ont.
Best wishes only.
Home address: PO Box 94, Pinelake RR 1, Bayfield, ON N0M 1G0

1961 September 1 2001
40th anniversary
HANK & ELS KUNTZ
(nee DEN ENGELSE)
Friends and family are warmly invited to an open house on Saturday, Sept. 8, 2001, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Road, Etobicoke.
We give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Gerard & Jane Kuntz
Caleb, Logan, Reuben
Neil Kuntz
Lynn Kuntz
Geoff Kuntz

Murmerwoude, Fr. Brampton, Ont.
1946 August 29 2001
"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever." (Ps.118:1)
With praise and thanks to God, we rejoice in the celebration of the 55th wedding anniversary of
JAC. and HILLY VANDERMEER
(nee ALKEMA)
on August 29, 2001.
May the Lord continue to keep you in His loving care.
Congratulations and best wishes, with love, from your children:
Klaas & Ruth Vandermeer — Cambridge, Ont.
Siebe & Mary Vandermeer — Orangeville, Ont.
Dorothy & Harry VanSpronsen — Acton, Ont.
Sye & Elly Vandermeer — Georgetown, Ont.
Janet & Mike Hunnersen — Cambridge, Ont.
Harry & Sandy Vandermeer — McKellar, Ont.
and from all your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S, HT 605, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Travel

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1-800-667-2525
TORONTO 416-224-6211
BRADFORD 905-775-6763
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Emergency Service Available
Visit us @ www.dca-travel.com
ON SALE: KLM, A. C., Canada 3000
MARTINAIR... DIRECT
Ont. Reg. 01495998

1956 September 15 2001
"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given unto him." (James 1:5)
It is with joy and thanksgiving that we look forward to celebrating our parents' and grandparents' 45th wedding anniversary.
ANDY and ALICE VANDERVEEN
(nee SCHENK)
We pray for God's continued blessing in your lives.
Betty & John Haagsma — London, Ont.
Brent, Samara, Jared, Brianna
Kase & Liz VanderVeen — Holland, Mich.
Cory, Andrew, Daniel, Natalie
Diane & Ralph Bakker — Palmerston, Ont.
Leah, Aaron, Janelle, Adrianna
Sharon & Jeff Howard — Toronto, Ont.
Tristan, Keenan, Noel
An Open House will be held on Saturday, September 15, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Bethel Christian Reformed Church, London, Ont., 716 Classic Dr.
Best wishes only.
Home address: 233 Admiral Dr., London, ON N5V 1H9

Obituaries

HOMME BROUWER
went home to be with his Lord, on August 10, 2001, at the age of 85, from his home, surrounded by his family.
Beloved husband of Jetske Brouwer (nee Heslinga) for 61 years.
Dear father and grandfather of:
Bram & Alice Brouwer — Wallaceburg
Sky & Devy, Kip & Susan, Melia & Ron, Aaron & Kris, Jeremy & Alana
Aafke & Keith DePooter — Ottawa
Scott & Marika, Tanya (deceased), Natalya & Laurence, Krista
Fred Brouwer — Cold Lake
Danielle & Jason, Barry, Meghan and 13 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by one brother and four sisters.
Dr. Bram Brouwer conducted the funeral service at the Christian Reformed Church, Wallaceburg, on August 13, 2001.
Correspondence address: 5 McKee Rd., Wallaceburg, ON N8A 4P9

"The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?" (Ps.27:1)
Peacefully, in her 87th year, our wife, mother and Oma
WILLY KOOLE
left this earth to be with her/our Lord and Saviour, on August 13, 2001.
Sybrand — her husband of over 62 years.
Joe & Joan Koole
Jani & Andy teNyenhuis
John & Juanita Koole
Cor & Dianne Koole
Dora & Nick Clemens
Marg & Larry Williamson
17 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.
Home address:
P502-7900 McLaughlin Rd. S, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

Classifieds

Obituaries

On the 27th of July, 2001
MARTIN REEMEYER
was taken to be with his Lord at the age of 78 years.
Beloved husband of Tine.
Dear father of:
Angie & Owen — Brantford
Martin Jr., Mary & Elizabeth — Cambridge
John — Guelph
also several grandchildren.
We thank the Lord for this loving and gifted man. Our heartfelt thanks to all who showed their sympathy and support at this difficult time.
The Reemeyer family.

"Cast all your troubles on Him, because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7; our wedding text, March 12, 1953)
After a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer, at the age of 69,
CORRIE (CORNELIA W.) SCHINKEL
passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her family, on August 20, 2001, safe in the arms of Jesus.
Corrie is survived by Bill, her loving husband and best friend for over 48 years.
Dearly loved mother of:
Jim & Margot — Kitchener
Bob & Pearl — Hamilton
Brian & Betty — Ancaster
Corinne & David Ethier — Ancaster
Lynn & Bill Groen — Caledonia
Adored grandmother of 15 grandchildren.
Also survived by two brothers and their wives in the Netherlands, Gerrit & Riet van Buuren of Zwolle and Co & Wil van Buuren of Zeist. Dear sister-in-law to all of Bill's nine brothers and sisters and their spouses in Ontario, The Yukon, the Netherlands and Belgium.
Special thanks to Drs. Arnold and Waddell and the staff at the Hamilton Cancer Centre, visiting VON nurses and the staff of Bayshore Healthcare who have all contributed to Corrie's comfort in the last days of her life here on earth.
In accordance with Corrie's wishes, donations may be made in her memory to Wellwood Resource Centre, c/o Henderson Hospital, Concession St., Hamilton ON L8V 1C3. To all who knew her, Corrie became a special friend.

Help wanted

Kralt Greenhouses Ltd, a family run greenhouse operation near Millgrove, Ontario, is looking for full and/or part-time help, beginning September, 2001. Dental/prescription plan available. Please **call 905-659-7638; fax 905-659-7909; e-mail: pjkralt@skyline.net** or write to: **Kralt Greenhouses Ltd., 939-943 Concession 6 West, RR 1 Millgrove, ON L0R 1V0** for more details.

For Sale

TRAILER FOR SALE AT
Little Europe Resort Near Bracebridge
This 31 foot 1999 Terry Trailer is equipped with all appliances and A/C, a side slide-out section and a large 20 ft x 10 ft deck. The trailer was delivered new to this fully serviced site in May 2000 and is covered by the manufacturer's warranty till May 2002. Contact **Robert Monster** toll free at: **1-866-945-1803** for more information.

Weddings

Fenelon Falls, Ont. Harriston, Ont.
Gerrit & Aartje Struik
and
Martin & Jenny Oldengarm
celebrated with family and friends the marriage of their children
Naomi and Jonathan
on August 18, 2001 at Knox College Chapel, University of Toronto.
John 15:1-12
Jonathan and Naomi live at
304-3445 Hutchison, Montréal, Quebec H2X 2G2

FLIKWEERT-OUSSOREN:
With joy and thankfulness to God, Dan & Hetty Flikweert of Kitchener, Ont. and Piet & Willie Oussoren of Peterborough, Ont. are pleased to announce the marriage of their children
Rachel Melissa Flikweert
to
Teunis Johannes (Hans) Oussoren
The wedding will take place, D.V., on Saturday, September 15, 2001 at Community CRC, Kitchener, at 11:00 a.m., with Rev. William Koopmans officiating. Rachel & Hans will be making their new home at RR 2, 611 Hayes Line, Omemee, ON K0L 2W0.
Proverbs 3:3-6

For Sale

ALONG THE TIMBER LINE
"Delightfully different!" The twelve chapters of this book by Rev. Bill Moody portray the church pews, Jack Pine, Mary Maple, Oscar Oak, Sally Spruce and others discussing such pertinent matters as — Why go to church? — Say it with music — A broken nose! — Money talks — It's in the Book — Take me to your leader — The other rib! Send $5.95 plus $1.60 for mailing, to **Rev. W.H. Moody, 413-3097 Palmer Drive, Burlington ON L7M 4G8** (Please mention where you saw this ad).

Re-Opening

HUNTLEY's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. Phone 905-988-9223.
Opening September 4, 2001.

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

Miscellaneous

Play it safe on fall nature hikes

Hunter Orange may not be enough

(NC)—The fall is a great time for a hike in the woods. The splendour of autumn colours, the crisp smell of the forest, all add up to a truly pleasurable experience. Of course, there are dangers in the fall forest, and you'd do well to keep them in mind.

St. John Ambulance, Canada's leader in first aid training and products, advises there is no way to be completely safe when hunters and nature lovers occupy the same space. But you can reduce the risk by following these common sense tips.

- Wear bright clothing that won't blend into the woods. Fluorescent colours are best.
- Always carry a first aid kit, as available from St. John Ambulance.
- Take a buddy if possible. And if you are alone, make sure someone else knows where you are and when you will return.
- Take nourishment, water and a quick energy snack.
- Wear proper shoes. Don't go hiking in shoes that are fashionable but not functional.
- Bring a whistle or small air horn to alert others or startle a wild animal should you be confronted.
- Know where you are. Don't venture off the trail into unknown territory. Always carry a map or compass in unfamiliar surroundings.
- Watch the weather. Don't plan a long hike when the potential for bad weather exists.
- Keep pets restrained. A dog is still an animal, which can be mistaken by a hunter or challenged by other wild creatures.
- Pace yourself. Don't walk away from your starting point until you're too tired to return safely. A circular route is best.
- Know how to handle an emergency. It can be the difference between life and death.

As Canada's leader in first aid training and products for more than 100 years, St. John Ambulance can provide with quality services you can trust. Take it from the best, contact the St. John Ambulance branch nearest you.

- News Canada

St.John Ambulance
First in First Aid

Food..? For Thought..??

G R A C E
God's Riches At Christ's Expense!

Self-discovery of Imprisoned Persons

A Federal Inmate
Casey Vander Stelt
'Born From Experience'
(905) 385-9261

Job Opportunity

"Employment Opportunity"
Skilled Trades

Are you a young, energetic individual, just finished school, not sure what to do with your future? Have you considered a skilled trade?

We are a Waterdown based industrial contractor requiring personnel for industrial installations. We are looking for a hard working individual, self-starter, with a willingness to learn all areas of our business.
Some experience in the following areas: welding/fabrication, mechanical assembly, sheet metal work and process piping would be a definite asset but not essential.
Some travel may be required.
Fair wage rate and benefit package available to the right individuals.

Please fax your resumes to **Nyman Bros Ltd.**
905-689-0997

Miscellaneous

Now advertise your business every month. BUSINESS DIRECTORY ads are 2.5"x1.75". Cost is only $25.00 plus GST ($26.75).

"Do it now while you can make the choice. My wife & I want to make the move now, while we are both fit. We look forward to some freedom, with no more grass to cut, or snow to shovel. Surrounded by a community of friends we just can't wait!"

Henry Rumph, purchaser & future resident

Now Under Construction!

Act now – Good Selection of Suites Remain

Shalom Evergreen Terrace

- 1 & 2 Bedroom suites up to 1,398 sq. ft.
- affordable suites from $129,900
- 6 Whirlpool appliances, storage locker
- secure indoor parking and car wash bay
- access to optional support services
- 55 plus Christian community

Imagine the time and freedom to enjoy!

Open House Mondays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Mountainview CRC, 290 Main St. E., Grimsby
Call 905.309.7888 today for details

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

REDEEMER University College

Vice-President (Academic)
Search Re-opened

Applications are invited for this renewable five-year appointment which begins July 1, 2002.

As the chief academic officer of the college, this person reports to the President and is responsible for the faculty, academic program, library and research centres of this vibrant undergraduate institution.

Candidates should have appropriate scholarly and administrative experience and be able to provide academic leadership which demonstrates a commitment to the Reformed Christian basis of the college.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae, a two or three page statement outlining a vision for Reformed Christian liberal arts and science university education, and three references.

Application deadline October 31, 2001, or until filled. Submit to:

Dr. Justin D. Cooper, President
777 Garner Road E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J
Tel: (905) 648-2131, Fax: (905) 648-2134,
cooper@redeemer.on.ca

Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be considerd first for this position. Redeemer University College is an equal opportunity employer.

DORDT COLLEGE
FACULTY POSITIONS

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2002-2003 in the following areas:

Communication
Education (Two positions)
Introduction, upper-level (elementary and secondary methods), special education
Foreign Language
Spanish
Physical Science
Social Work (Temporary position with possibility for regular appointment)
Generalist: micro-practice background: methods courses & field practice
Theatre Arts
Theatre generalist
Theology
General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712-722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web Site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Church Anniversary

50th Anniversary

The **Hope Christian Reformed Church in Brantford**, Ontario will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary on September 22 and 23, 2001. A dessert social is planned for the Saturday evening at 6:30, followed by a program of remembering and fun. Special Worship Services on Sunday will be held at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. with former pastors participating. All former members and friends are invited. Nursery will be provided. Address of the church:
64 Buchanan Crescent, Brantford, ON N3P 2A5. For information call:
Nancy **519-759-7581** or
Gerda **519-753-5543**.
E-mail: hopecrc@sympatico.ca

Send your anniversary, birthday and other important family notices to:
Christian Courier *at fax #: 905-682-8313, or by e-mail to: ccadpromo@aol.com*

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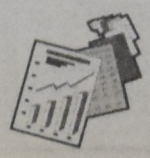
You can advertise in *Christian Courier's* Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25.00 + GST *Promote your business to thousands of readers across Canada.*



Event

ORGAN CONCERT

TWO GREAT MASTERS OF THE ORGAN
André Knevel and Ian Sadler
Celebrating the new trumpet of the organ
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2001. 8:00 P.M.

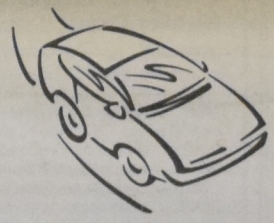
MOUNTAINVIEW CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
290 Main Street East, Grimsby
Admission $10.00 p.p.

Miscellaneous

Fall tune-up can provide peace of mind this winter

(NC)—Vehicle breakdowns are never a pleasant experience, but they can be particularly inconvenient and even dangerous in winter. That's why it is a good idea to have your vehicle tuned up this fall for peace of mind this winter.

A typical fall tune-up will include an oil and filter change and checks of the vehicle's tires, brakes and fuel, ignition, cooling and exhaust systems. It is a good idea to have this work done by an automotive professional — a family member or friend who is mechanically inclined may mean well, but do they really understand today's sophisticated engines?



Regular tune-ups do more than help prevent nasty surprises; they also reduce your vehicle's fuel consumption and exhaust emissions. Studies have shown that a poorly maintained vehicle can consume up to 50 percent more fuel than one that is running properly. And every litre of wasted fuel means that unnecessary pollution is being released into the atmosphere, where it contributes to problems such as climate change, urban smog and acid rain.

For more information, visit the Auto$mart Web site at http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/vehicles or call 1 800 387-2000 toll-free.

- News Canada

The Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

Awards are given annually for research papers on the topics selected by the Calvinism Committee. The 2002 topic:

John Calvin and Religious Persecution

Awards are payable to student tuition accounts at the colleges approved for offerings by the CRC Synod: Calvin, Dordt, King's, Redeemer, Reformed Bible, and Trinity Christian.

1st Prize: $2,500 • 2nd Prize: $1,250

For research paper guidelines and further information, request the Meeter Award Brochure * from The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, 3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA, tel. 616-957-7081.

Deadline for completed papers: January 15, 2002

** Brochures have also been sent to high schools associated with Christian Schools International.*

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Sept. 8	Pijnacker Reunion, at the Dutch Mill, Millgrove Rd, **Waterdown**, Ont. Starting 10 a.m. Call 905-689-1588
Sept.14-16	First CRC **Brandon,** Man., 50th anniversary. Call 204-727-4652 or 204-725-1445.
Sept.15-16	Retirement and Farewell Rev. A. Van Geest, **Blyth** CRC, Saturday 7:30 p.m., Sunday Service 7:30 p.m.
Sept.22	Benefit concert organ/piano Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby,** Ont. Ian Sadler and André Knevel 8 p.m.
Sept. 22-23	Exeter Chr. Reformed Church, **Exeter,** Ont. 50th anniversary. For info. call 519-235-2990
Sept. 22-23	Hope CRC, **Brantford**, Ont. 50th anniversary celebration. For info. call 519-759-7581 or 519-753-5543
Sept. 28	Liberation Choir Concert: **Owen Sound**, Ont. 8 p.m. Division St. United Church, 977 4th Ave. E.
Sept. 29	Liberation Choir, **Bowmanville**, Ont. 8 p.m. Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, 2805 Hwy 2 E.
Sept. 29-30	Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont. 25th anniversary celebration. Saturday 7:30 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m.
Oct. 6	Mountainview Concerts, Man of Praise, Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby,** Ont.
Oct. 13	**Netherlands Bazaar**, Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave., **Thornhill,** Ont. Market Place: crafts, etc. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Auction 7-10 p.m., Dutch Food delicacies 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. For info. call 905-878-1040
Oct. 13	Chapel Singers, Mountainview CRC concerts, **Grimsby,** Ont.
Oct. 20	Liberation Choir, **Hamilton,** Ont. 8 p.m., Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James St. N.
Oct. 26	Repeat Performance on **Vision TV** , celebration at Hamilton Place of 25th Anniversary Canadian Christian Education Foundation; 1000 voice student choir etc., 9 p.m. ET; 6 p.m. PT.
Oct. 26	Mountainview concerts, Organ André Knevel, Sandor Van Marion, Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby**, Ont.
Nov. 2	Christian Festival Concert, direction Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto.** Call 416-636-9779
Nov. 6	2001 Annual Church & Law Seminar, Bramalea Baptist Church, **Bramalea** located in Greater Toronto. Theme: "Ten Hot Topics for Churches and Religious Charities". Registration forms at www.charitylaw.ca and the host, Carter & Associates, 519-942-0001, fax: 519-942-0300; e-mail: seminars@charitylaw.ca
Nov. 9	Concert **Clinton** CRC, 7:30 p.m. Laurens Kaldeway, organ, Blyth Fest. Orchestra; Ron Greidanus, piano; Men of Note. Call 519-482-5372
Nov. 23	Liberation Choir, **Orangeville,** Ont. 8 p.m. , Orangeville Can. Ref. Church, 55 C-Line.
Nov. 24	Liberation Choir, **London,** Ont. 8 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, 472 Richmond St.
	Information for all Liberation Choir concerts: 905-457-2348
Dec. 8	Mountainview concert, **Grimsby.** André Knevel, organ, flute, Stephanie Scholman, violin, Hosanna Choir.
Dec. 15	Can. Chr. Education Foundation next **VISION TV** broadcasting. See Oct.26 date of this calendar.

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

MEADOW VALLEY HOUSE
Seniors Residence, Dundas, Ont.
- 24 hr. assisted daily living care
- meals, laundry service provided
- English & Dutch spoken
For more info, call 905-627-1108

Consider placing a Personal Ad. $16.00/column inch per insertion. One time set-up fee is $35.00 for a box number. GST is extra..

Campus Ministries

Free Drinks at U of T!

That's right, free drinks at the CRC Campus Ministry to the University of Toronto. Coffee, tea, juice, even wine before breakfast. But more importantly, the water of life - at no charge! **Campus ministers Brian Walsh, Geoff Wichert and Charleen Jongejan** are serving. Come to our opening reception in the chaplaincy office at **Wycliffe College, 5 Hoskin Ave. On Thursday, September 13 from 5:00 to 8:00**, or check out our website: **chaplains.sa.utoronto.ca/crc/**

Brock University, St. Catharines
Friends in Faith and Learning

Be part of a vital Christian community! Brock Campus Ministries warmly welcomes all new and returning students for refreshments at **an open house, Sept. 4-7, 10am-2 pm in the Campus Ministries Centre, DeCew 202.** Check out the student Christian Fellowship BBQ, cost suppers, meditation centre prayer services, and fall weekend retreat. There are also six CRC churches in the area. For more information, or if you need some help getting settled, stop by campus pastor Peter Schuurman's office, check our website at **www.brocku.ca/ministries**, or call **905-688-5550 ext. 3134.**

University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University
HURON CAMPUS MINISTRY AT WATERLOO, Classis Huron

The Church in the Woods, Waterloo Christian Reformed Church, is pleased to invite all Waterloo area university and college students, their parents and friends, to a Student Welcome Service,
Sun., Sept. 9, 2001, 10:30 a.m.
After the service, information about Huron Campus Ministry and Grace Christian Fellowship at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University will be presented and an excellent luncheon provided. Please contact:
Graham E. Morbey at 519-886-1474, 519-884-1970 ext. 2739
or e-mail gmorbey@wlu.ca
Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is located at 209 Bearinger Road

Miscellaneous

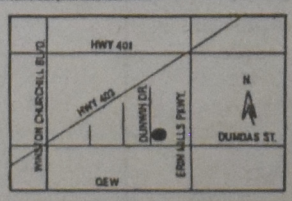
TIME FOR NEW FURNITURE?

Come and see our beautiful showroom with the European flair!

SCHRÖDER FURNITURE

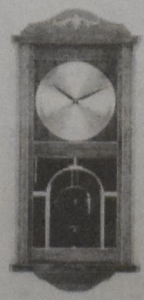
... for that special item!

Our "coil" spring furniture has all the support and comfort you need.



Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

Celebrate your Dutch heritage with quality time and unique clocks.



Choose from a wonderful selection of imported quality clocks from Holland. Frisian, Zaanse, Amsterdamse & 18th century French style clocks, all uniquely hand crafted.

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Fax: 519-291-4211

News

Samaritan's Purse works in remote corner of Siberia

PHOTOS COURTESY SAMARITAN'S PURSE

A single-engine plane transports Samaritan's Purse staff and supplies to the Russian province of Chukotka.

Alan Doerksen

CALGARY, Alta. — In a far corner of northeastern Siberia, relief agency Samaritan's Purse has been working to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the local people.

In a recent newsletter, Samaritan's Purse international president Franklin Graham wrote about the agency's work in the remote Russian province of Chukotka. "On a map, Chukotka looks like an arrowhead pointing from Far East Russia across the Bering Strait toward Alaska. There are only 72,000 people living in a desolate wilderness that is bigger than Texas, and many of them have had no contact with the church of Jesus Christ. Isolated by rugged mountains, icy seas, and frozen tundra, Chukotka is truly one of the far corners of the earth."

Samaritan's Purse has a history of working in remote places, and began working in far-eastern Russia in 1995. From the agency's base in Alaska, teams of doctors and dentists have flown in, along with medical supplies and equipment. The agency has also supplied food and medicine for isolated settlements, nutritional formula for infants, and fishing nets for coastal villages to help them be more self-sufficient, according to its July newsletter.

Dangerous traveling

Roger Shea, Samaritan's Purse project manager for Alaska and the Russian Far East, tells CC his agency faces big challenges in Chukotka. "It's just so hard to get there." He usually flies a Cessna Caravan single-engine plane from Nome, Alaska to the Chukotkan city of Provideniya. Once there, he and other agency workers travel by means of a tractor-like polar vehicle.

Recently, one driver of such a vehicle got stuck in the tundra for 10 days, and had to sleep in the tractor until he was rescued, reports Shea. Another vehicle fell through the ice while driving across a frozen cove. "You have to be careful because of the temperature," he says.

Another time, a storm caused the water pipes of two churches in Provideniya to freeze, breaking their central heating systems. Samaritan's Purse works with these churches on several projects such as Operation Christmas Child, which involves giving shoeboxes filled with gifts to needy children, explains Shea. "This last winter," says Shea. "We flew in almost 2,000 boxes to Provideniya."

The agency also helps the two churches do outreach work in their communities. "We're trying to partner with the local churches there to evangelize their people," explains Shea. Working with local churches gives Samaritan's Purse workers the opportunity and freedom to tell people about Jesus.

Brutal living conditions

Recently, says Shea, "we were asked by the mayor of Provideniya to set up a first-aid clinic" — and to supply first-aid items for clinics in outlying villages. When the agency discovered that Provideniya's hospital had no sutures, it sent in suture supplies last September.

Life is Chukotka is "pretty brutal," observes Shea. "Life expectancy is short" — about 50 years. But he says that "Chukotka is opening up. The last governor prohibited us from going in," but the new governor is "doing a better job," and is more open to the agency's work. "Next year, we're able to go to Anadyr, the capital" to run Operation Christmas Child for the first time, Shea says.

Franklin Graham recently wrote in a newsletter: "In recent months, the Chukotka province has come under a new governor who is strengthening relations with other countries, like Canada and the United States, and actively seeking to improve the welfare of the people. Samaritan's Purse wants to take advantage of this opportunity to work with the new government. God is graciously using this ministry to help restore the hopes of the people of Chukotka."

The Chukotkan city of Provideniya, located between soaring mountains and a frozen bay, is experiencing God's providence through the work of Samaritan's Purse.

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News Digest

Rejected bouquets blossom

FORT WORTH, Texas (Religion Today) — When members of Travis Avenue Baptist Church arrived at church in July, there were 10,000 bouquets of flowers waiting for them.

The flowers had been destined for a local supermarket but the manager felt the temperature in the delivery trailer was inadequate and refused to accept the shipment. Daymark Trucking felt that rather than let the flowers go to waste, they would ask the Fort Worth, Texas, church if it would accept the shipment as a donation.

The result was that the church members were asked to take as many flowers as they wanted — and distribute them to whomever they wanted, with the message that they were a gift from the church. As the flowers went out to neighbors, nursing homes, area businesses and hospitals, happy responses from those who received the flowers began to come back to the church.

One woman recounted that a neighbor who got flowers "smiled for the first time in the 10 years I have known her."

The Taj Mall

TORONTO — Traditionalists in India are outraged at a plan to surround the Taj Mahal with fast-food outlets and a shopping mall, reports the *Globe and Mail*.

The plan is part of a two-phase restoration and development deal signed this summer by the Indian government and the Taj Group, the country's largest hotel chain.

The Taj Mahal, built in 1629, has been suffering from pollution and neglect.

Cheque this out

TOPEKA, Kansas (AP) — Police officer Jason Cooper was in the right place at the right time when a man tried to cash a stolen cheque in Topeka, Kansas. But after he arrested the man, Cooper learned that the cheque was his own, stolen when his car was burgled more than a month ago.

The suspect "was pretty shocked" when he realized the name on the cheque matched the one on the arresting officer's badge. "It was some pretty sweet justice," asserted Cooper.